MADHUSUDAN DAS AND HIS TIMES

A Study in Orissan Renaissance

BISHNU PRASAD MOHAPATRA

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SUBARNAREKHA
BHUBANESWAR

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PREFACE

Orissa had a long glorious past. Its boundary had extended up to river Godavary in the south and Ganges in the north. It was famous for its maritime activities. But it lost its glory gradually after the death of its last independent ruler Mukundadeva in the year 1568. The nation was disintegrated into numerous small states under the successive onslaught of the Afgans, the Mughals and the Marathas. The scant respect for the welfare of the people of Orissa by these foreign rulers led to an atmosphere of total chaos and confusion. The only objective of these rulers was exploitation. Thus two hundred years of ruthless exploitation and extortion broke the backbone of the nation and the once proud nation was reduced to total poverty and misery. Under such a state of affairs the British occupied Orissa- the southern part in 1768, the coastal tracts in 1803 and the western part comprising Sambalpur and its adjacent regions in 1849.

On account of this piecemeal conquest Orissa remained politically divided. To add to the miseries of the Oriya speaking people, the whole division of Orissa was governed by three different administrative agencies- the southern part by Madras Presidency; the western part comprising Sambalpur and its adjacent regions by the Central Provinces and the coastal areas comprising Balasore, Cuttack and Puri by the Bengal Presidency. The historical wrong committed by the British administration by such arrangements made the Oriyas a minority in each of these regions and they were left to suffer. They had different problems in each of these separate regions. However, the common problems faced by them were on account of language, education and employment and they felt that their own identity was being threatened. To make it worse, the British administration did not show any special interest or concern for the Oriya speaking regions. The first sign of resentment of such neglect was manifested in the Paika- rebellion in 1817. The rebellion was crushed by the British administration

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but did not make any enquiry into the cause of unrest. A greater catastrophe in the form of famine took place in 1866.

During the early period of the British administration the Oriyas felt most insecured about their language and culture due to the chauvinistic attacks by the Telugus, the Hindi speaking people, and the Bengalis, because Oriyas were in minority in each area. Thus a spirit of nationalism slowly started forming amongst the Oriyas and they feverishly wanted to safeguard their culture and language. They were in need of a leader to guide them who would fight for their cause and bind them together in preserving their identity. In such a scenario Madhusudan Das appeared in the political scene of Orissa in 1880.

Madhusudan Das had a rare intellect and he was a man of firm decision. He was a staunch nationalist and had a deep sense of respect for his motherland. To ameliorate the condition of the Oriyas he fought for long half a century. The Oriya speaking people scattered in different regions at once acknowledged his leadership with a sense of gratitude. During this period numerous agitations, memorials, publication of periodicals, formation of associations started to pinpoint the grievances faced by the Oriya-speaking people under British administration and sought for redress. For all such movements Madhusudan remained the guide and philosopher.

I acknowledge the deep debt I owe to Prof. P.K. Mishra, formerly Professor of History, Sambalpur University, who helped me to write this book; to Prof. J.M. Mohanty, formerly Professor of English, Utkal University, who encouraged me to see through the printing of this book; Sri Surendra Mishra, writer and publisher, who gladly undertook the publication of this book; and my wife Sagarbala and my daughter Chayanika whose unstinted support all the time was a great pleasure. I will consider my effort amply rewarded if readers approve my account of Sri Madhusudan Das, probably the greatest leader ever born in Orissa in the last 150 years.

Bishnu Prasad Mohapatra

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CHAPTER - 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND DISADVANTAGES OF EARLY BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

Orissa lost her independence in 1568 to be ruled successively by the Afghans, the Mughals and the Marathas till the advent of the British in 1803. The beginning of British rule ushered some basic changes in the land revenue administration which profoundly affected the economic life of the people. The new Government was run by a group of rapacious adventurers without any sympathy or understanding for the subjects; the period of misrule and exploitation was prolonged leading to a great explosion in 1817 and a worst catastrophe in 1866. Both these events were turning points in the history of Orissa.

The rule of the Imperial Gangas and the Suryavamsi Gajapatis (1110 - 1550) witnessed the heyday of political and cultural achievements in the history of Orissa, when her territories had extended from the river Ganga in the North, to Godavari in the South, and the Bay of Bengal in the East, to the Amarkantak Hills in the West. During this period the magnificent temples of Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark were built; the Oriya language and literature evolved and the recurring Muslim invasions failed to make a dent in the political stability of Orissa. But the death of the last independent ruler Mukundadeva in 1568 administered a rude shock upon this ancient land, as the successive sway of the Afghans, the Mughals and the Marathas, apart from bestowing a prolonged period of misrule for over two hundred years, ravaged the countryside ruthlessly through periodic depredations, extortions

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and vandalism. Orissa, experiencing an uphill task to sustain her political and cultural eminence, slowly began to disintegrate in the 17th and 18th centuries giving rise to numerous small States under petty chieftains. In the 18th century the Qutab Sahi family of Golconda and the Nawab of Bengal respectively ruled upon the southern and the coastal areas of Orissa separately. During the Mughal period Orissa had been divided into five administrative sub-units called `Sarkars`, viz., Jaleswar, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Kalinga Dandpat and Rajmahendry. The Nawab of Bengal administered the first three Sarkars, whereas Kalinga Dandpat and Rajmahendry formed part of Chicacole Sarkar under Golconda. In 1751 Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal passed on Orissa (south of the river Suvarnarekha upto Chilika lake) to the Bhonsle of Nagpur. Since then Orissa, excepting the southern portion (south of Chilika lake), came under the rule of the Marathas and the Bhonsles administered this province through their Governors stationed at Cuttack till 1803 when the city along with the fort of Barabati was captured by the forces of the East India Company.

Territorial Dismemberment

British commercial relations with Orissa had begun since 1633 when the East India Company established their factories at Hariharpur. Subsequently, the port of Balasore became the nerve-centre of their maritime trade. With the silting up of the river Balanga, Balasore began to decline and was supplanted by Calcutta in the early part of the 18th century. It was only after the grant of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765 that the East India Company developed political interest for Orissa which culminated in the occupation of the southern part in 1768, and the coastal tracts in 1803. Sambalpur and the adjacent regions in the western part of Orissa finally came under the British rule in 1849. On account of this piecemeal conquest, Orissa remained politically divided - the area comprising modern districts of Ganjam and Koraput were administered from Madras as a part of the Madras Presidency; the coastal districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri constituted the Orissa Division of the Bengal Presidency;

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and Sambalpur with its adjacent tributary States formed a part of the Central provinces. Such territorial vivisection was utterly ruinous for an ancient people with rich cultural heritage, because in each of the Provinces the Oriya-speaking people formed a minority. Their language, literature and culture were pushed to the wings due to the dominance of the Telugus in Madras, Bengalis in Bengal and the Hindi-speaking people in the Central Provinces. In all these three Provinces invidious campaigns were launched in the 19th century to obliterate Oriya language and culture which gave rise to acute racial tension. The attempts of Bengali scholars and officials in the 1860s to establish the superiority of Bengali culture and language in the Orissa Division, the Resolution No.237, dated 15th January 1895, of the Government of the Central Provinces substituting Hindi in place of Oriya as the court language of Sambalpur; and the discriminatory treatment against the Oriyas in Ganjam area led to public controversies and agitation. Everywhere the minority Oriya community groaned under the chauvinistic attitudes of the majority community and blamed the artificial administrative division as the most potent cause of their plight.

After its occupation in December 1803, the Orissa Division (under the Bengal Presidency) formed the nucleus of the Oriya-speaking tracts, the total area of which was 23,907 sq. miles including the tributary States. These tributary States were : Angul, Athgarh, Banki, Daspalla, Dhenkanal, Hindol, Khandapara, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Narasinghpur, Nayagarh, Nilgiri, Ranpur, Sukinda, Talcher and Tigiria. The tributary States were outside the scope of direct administration of Bengal since the Bengal rules and regulations were not applicable there. The Commissioner of the Orissa Division (consisting of the districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri) exercised merely supervisory authority over the administration of the tributary States as their Superintendent, leaving internal autonomy in the hands of the Princes.

Early British Administration

The British rule in Orissa was not a happy time for the

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people; it had numerous disadvantages. In their attempts at progressive organisation of the revenue of Cuttack, the Government followed short-term land revenue settlements which resulted in fluctuating assessment. Since the revised-assessment was always without any consideration of the actual yield of the land or with reference to the actual quality of land under cultivation, the peasant proprietors experienced real hardship. Frequent short-term arbitrary settlements spelt disastrous consequences for the Zamindars as well. They could hardly meet the ever-increasing demands of the Government and found themselves in extreme peril for default in payment of revenue. They fell into heavy arrears and often lost their estates in public auction. Due to short-term settlements, over-assessment, and timely collection of revenue, the Zamindars often sold their estates at a throw-away price or made it over to the charges of the Government to be relieved of their loans and arrears. Since the Government showed no leniency in collecting dues on the scheduled dates for which no advance notice was given to the proprietors, the latter were either forced to incur loan from the money-lenders to deposit the 'Jama' or were helpless if for default, the estates were attached and subsequently sold by public auction. In this process during the period December 1806 to December 1816, out of a total 2340 estates in Orissa 1011 were sold by public auction for arrears of revenue. These estates were mostly purchased by rich Bengalis from Calcutta who slowly began to replace the Oriya land-holders forming a new class of exploiters. This happened due to several factors (i) The Oriya Zamindars could not know the date of auction: (ii) The distance between Cuttack and Calcutta was formidable: (iii) The Bengali clerks manipulated records and matters in such a way that hampered the interests of the Oriya Zamindars. These factors had a cumulative effect in depriving and dispossessing the Oriya Zamindars from their estates. Lands in Orissa passed on to the hands of complete strangers. During that period 350 estates were purchased by outsiders, and 891 Oriya proprietors were reduced to complete impoverishment. Purchase and sale of land became a vicious trade "with a whole

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herd of inferior miscreants, dependent instruments and parasites" (OHRJ, III, 4) who thrived on this business of rapacity, greed and plunder. Corruption in the bureaucracy was rampant. The Amlas, invariably one and all - the Sheristadars, the Nazirs, the Police and the Salt Darogas vied with each other to make easy money. People began to feel, and quite justifiably, that the Maratha Government with its entire absence of system was better adapted to the state of society in which they existed than the British Government with its 'enlightened, humane and refined' (S. Mohanty, 1972) one.

Plight of the Landholder

During the Maratha rule, and even earlier, the military chiefs in the tributary States were enjoying rent-free Jagirs. Those who rendered military service in times of war also enjoyed similar Jagir lands and were called the Paikas. British Government refused to allow the Paikas and their military leaders special privilege or Jagirs. Major Fletcher, who made the first settlement of Puri resumed all the Jagir lands, depriving about 10,000 Paikas from their ancient privilege. Their lands were assessed at the same rate as those of the Ryots. Such indiscriminate resumption naturally caused great resentment among the landed militia. W. Forrester, the Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Khurda rightly observed this action of Major Fletcher as a harsh one (Letter to A. Sterling, the Commissioner, 1.7.1818)

> When I first took charge of Khurda I was disposed to consider it a very harsh measure, the general resumption of all the Jageerlands and to think that it in no small degree contributed to the zeal and eagerness with which the inhabitants of Khurda joined the Bukshee, (Bukshee Jagabandhu Vidyadhar was the military commander of the Raja of Khurda and leader of Paika rebellion of 1817) in the insurrection. I am still of the opinion that almost total resumption of Jageers and particularly the almost immediate assessment of

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a heavy tunkee as the small portions which had been reserved to the Dalbeheras and others, was a harsh measure.

Thus the British revenue policy was neither beneficial to the Zamindars nor to the Ryots.

Within a few years of the imposition of the British rule, the Oriya Zamindars as a class began to disappear. Their place in the socio-economic life of the country was occupied by the outsiders who enjoyed their estates through agents. These agents had no sympathy for the local inhabitants or peasants and thrived on ruthless exploitation. Thus J.W. Kaye states - "When we first began to dabble in revenue affairs, we found that whatever may have been the system of land assessment it was bearing only the bitter fruits of extortion and oppression. Every man tried in his turn to pay as little and exact as much from his neighbour as fraud and falsehood could compass." (OHRJ. III.) The condition of Oriya **Ryots** and **Paikas** fast dwindled due to triennial, biennial and annual settlements which resulted in increasing assessment. Those reduced to improverishment were forced to sell away their clothes, furniture, bullocks, utensils and sometimes even their wives and children, before resorting to complete destitution.

Depreciation of Cowry Currency

The depreciation of Cowry currency was another distressing feature of the early British administration. In Orissa Cowry was used in monetary transaction from very early times. It continued to be the main currency under the Mughals and the Marathas and was accepted by the British in 1803 as a medium of exchange. The British authorities collected revenue in Cowries till 1808, when they stopped receiving payments in the form of Cowries. This led to a sudden depreciation of Cowry currency and uncertainty in the market causing great hardship to the people. Since the Government insisted upon payment of their dues in silver Tankas, the exchange value of silver Tankas became exhorbitantly high. This affected the Zamindars who found it extremely difficult to pay the Government dues. Even borrowing of silver Tankas at

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an enormous interest from the shroffs was not easy due to its scarcity. The economic position of the Zamindars and Ryots alike became deplorable. The fall in the value of Cowries resulted in the rise of Cowry price of commodities everywhere. In Cuttack market the rise in prices was recorded to be almost 50% during 1807-1808 and 1816-1817. In the countryside the rate of increase was still higher. This affected everyone. The common man found himself utterly confused in the new system of currency introduced by the Government and due to his long association with Cowry currency failed to give it up in non-official use. Thus for sometime the circulation of two currencies caused profound chaos.

Salt Monopoly

The salt monopoly of the British Government was another unpopular measure which affected the common man's life in Orissa. The manufacture and sale of salt was a flourishing trade in the coastal tracts of Orissa much before the advent of the British. During the Maratha rule about three lakh maunds of salt was exported per annum. The quantity of salt exported to Bengal is not known. But during the ten years preceding 1803 (annexation of Orissa), the company was importing at an average rate 68,269 maunds per annum. The annual income of the Maratha Government from exporting salt to Bengal during this period was approximately Rupees two lakhs. In order to monopolise this lucrative trade, in 1804 the Governor-General-in-Council reserved for the Government the exclusive privilege of manufacturing salt in Orissa. A salt agent for Orissa was appointed at Fort William to look after the salt and opium department. He was responsible for the manufacture and management of the sale, export of surplus salt and prevention of smuggling. It was soon found that the price of salt took an upward trend rising as high as five to six times its former price. While in 1804 the price of salt per maund was 88 paise, in 1817 it was sold for Rupees Four per maund. Since Bengal could offer this high price, salt found its way out from Orissa causing acute scarcity in the land of its production where the people's purchasing power was less than that of Bengal. The lower classes of people

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were almost precluded from purchasing this essential article. Scarcity of salt made their condition more distressful because next to rice it was the most important item of food. Due to profiteering motive the Government remained indifferent to the sufferings of the people. But they found it difficult to check smuggling in which the salt Amlas took active part. Naturally the people grudged. The Collector of Cuttack wrote :

> Whatever the real causes may be or where the fault may be, I confess myself quite unable to decide, but certain it is that the cry for salt is general throughout the district, not only is the high price complained of, a price which is said to preclude the lower classes of the people from purchasing it, but the difficulty of procuring it even by those who can afford to pay for it. (Trawer to the Board of Revenue, 13 May, 1877)

This led the Commissioner of Cuttack to believe that the advantages derived by the Government by the extension of salt monopoly "poorly compensates for the privation and discontent", occasioned by that measure to the people.

Corruption in Bureaucracy

The apathy of the government was evident in several aspects of the administration. In the coastal districts of Orissa there are several rivers, large and small, with their numerous tributaries, which during the rainy seasons often cross their banks and inundate huge areas of agricultural land causing irreparable damage. To prevent the havoc of floods rivers had been tamed by embankments which were most numerous in Cuttack district. During the Maratha period (1751 - 1803) they were maintained by the Zamindars. In 1806 by Regulation VI, the British Government entrusted the general charge of embankments to a Committee consisting of three members. There were two Superintendents for the management of embankments in northern and southern divisions. In 1813 a Surveyor was appointed for better management of the embankments. In spite of these measures, however, the

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conditions of the embankments began to deteriorate. In many places repairs were neglected and "public money was grossly misappropriated. The Darogas in charge of seasonal repair works made fortune for themselves and purchased lands with the money advanced for repairing the bunds. In this fraudulent practice even the Superintendents had a share and the fraud gradually became a system. As a result of this, during the floods the weak embankments very often gave way, inundating vast acres of cultivated land and inflicting untold miseries upon the people.

Judiciary

To what extent corruption had crept into the Government would be evident by a study of Judicial administration, which, apart from being inefficient, promoted extortion and fraud. The administration of criminal justice was vexatious causing great hardships to innocent prisoners. From 1805 Orissa was brought under the Bengal system of administration established by Lord Cornwallis. The Division was placed under the charge of one Magistrate and the Court of Circuit for Calcutta for criminal justice. The Magistrate had limited powers of fine and imprisonment besides the power to apprehend law-breakers and criminals. The Court of Circuit held its sessions twice a year following a complete procedure unlike the Maratha system. Subsequently, the Judges of Circuit "for their personal convenience" held the Session Court once a year. Since the people were not conversant with the code of laws, they were left entirely in the mercy of the Vakils. Very often the hearings of the Courts were delayed causing much inconvenience to the innocent prisoners and witnesses. Justice was quite expensive too. "Bribery, corruption, peculation and forgery, were rife in all the courts and public offices - notably in the Judges" (Toynbee). In 1828 the Munsifs of Bhadrak and Pattamundai were charged with corruption and embezzlement. To prevent exposure they destroyed their records either by burning the court or engaging burglars. It was a regular practice of the Zamindars to bribe the Amlas to get petitions and settlement papers passed through the office with favourable orders. Sanands

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and other deeds were indiscreetly forged without any moral compunction.

Police

The Police administration was thoroughly steeped with corruption which affected people both of the higher and the lower classes. J. Richardson, the Commissioner, found 'Excess and oppressions' committed by the Police Darogas, the Tahasildars, Amlas and parties of Sepoys. Even G. Martindell, the Military Commissioner (1817), observed "the enormous exactions and extortions of the Native Officers of the district, both Judicial, Police and Revenue (3.3.1818). Mirza Mehdi, the Police Daroga at Puri, was a legendary figure who "through a merciless system of exactions" amassed great fortune. Salim Ali of the Salt department of Balasore was another notorious figure famous for gross embezzlement. The family members of Saheb Zaman thrived very well through abuse of power and corruption. The Amlas and the Darogas became fabulously rich at the cost of Zamindars and Ryots. As there were not many Oriyas enjoying the offices of either Amlas or Darogas, the administration was run mostly by the Bengalis or Muslims protected by the Court. No one ventured to bring charges against the intriguing and corrupt officers for fear of victimisation. Consequently, there was a loss of confidence in the British laws and the integrity of the British courts. The Bengal Regulations instead of bestowing the benefits of an enlightened Government, introduced into Orissa "a herd of needy rapacious strangers" devoid of any moral ethics. Such rampant corruption and the inability of the Government to prevent it naturally alienated the people.

Deprivation of the Natives from Employment

Another factor was equally responsible for alienating the Oriyas from the British administration. At the time of occupation of Orissa a complete body of native Oriya officers serving in various capacities such as Amlas, Tahasildars etc. were available. Their services were dispensed with by the new Government

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whose modus operandi was based upon new rules and a new system with which the Oriyas were not conversant. Owing to their ignorance of the British rules and regulations they did not find appointment in the Government except against some posts of low categories. The idea of slowly training up the Oriyas in important offices did not find favourable consideration at all. Such exclusion of the natives from offices of trust and responsibilities in the Revenue, Judicial and Police departments had an adverse effect. It jeopardized Government interests in Orissa and the people felt deeply aggrieved for being ignored.

Interference in Jagannath Temple

Though the British Government adopted extreme caution in dealing with the religion and religious institutions of the people they gradually began to interfere in the management of the Jagannath temple at Puri. In 1805 they proposed to appoint a Committee of Pandits to superintend the affairs of the temple, and all receipts, disbursements and discipline were to be vested upon the Collector of Pilgrim Tax. With a view to improve the administration of the temple these proposals were enacted into laws as Regulation IV of 1806. But on this issue the members of the Governor General's Council were found to be divided. When the new system failed to yield desired results the Government released the Raja of Khurda from Midnapore in 1807 and handed over to him the management of the temple. Raja Mukundadeva II was imprisoned at Midnapore since 1805 for his hostilities against the Raj. By hereditary rights he enjoyed the sole authority to manage the Puri temple. But since then eschewing the policy of non-interference the Government exercised much control in the internal affairs of the temple. The practice of interference in the internal economy of a Hindu temple was not only contrary to the established policies, but also regarded as shameful. Watson, the fourth Judge of Calcutta Court of Circuit would therefore remark "It appears to me a shameful and insulting mockery of their old idolatrous superstition that an European public officer should have any interference or control in such matters." (Watson to Government, 3.5.1817).

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Humiliation of the Raja of Khurda

Mukundadeva II, the Raja of Khurda for his long and historic association with the Jagannath temple was highly respected by the Oriyas. In 1807 he was appointed the Superintendent of the temple without being restored to his estate of Khurda. His earnest appeal for a restoration of Khurda fell into deaf ears. Even as the Superintendent of the temple, much of his powers were curtailed by the government. By the Regulation XIX of 1810 the government reserved the right of removing even the Raja and his successors from the Superintendentship on ground of misconduct and incapacity. The Raja was often suspected and looked down upon by the government. His distress and humiliation grossly exhibited the authorities's lack of understanding and respect for the local institutions.

Thus, in Orissa the early British administration created an explosive situation. The frequent short-term revenue settlements, excessive taxation, unscrupulous Amlas, an indulgent and depraved bureaucracy, scarcity of currency, rise in the price of salt, demonetisation of cowry, widening gap between the ruler and the ruled, gradual extinction of the Oriya Zamindars, impoverishment of the common man, disrespect for the historic institutions and the denial of loaves and fishes to the sons of the soil had their cumulative effect in aggravating an unprecedented crisis. It took the shape of a rebellion in 1817 with Khurda and Puri as the main theatres of a violent struggle aimed at redeeming the land from the foreign rule. Trower, the Collector of Cuttack rightly stated "A system of extreme tyranny, violence and oppression has existed which has proved ruinous to this once flourishing country by the consequent desertion of a great proportion of the cultivators of the soil. I am concerned to state too that this system is to be dated from the conquest of Khurda by the British troops". (Trower to Board of Revenue, 23.7.1817). As if to reinforce this observation William Forrester, the Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Khurda wrote "The grand cause of that unfortunate event I am now satisfied was the dreadful misery and distress to which the whole of the inhabitants of Khurda had been reduced by the

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enormous assessment and the extortion of the numerous farmers." (To A. Sterling, 21.10.1819)

Paika Rebellion

Thirteen years of misrule ultimately resulted in the Paika rebellion of 1817 under the leadership of Bakshee Jagabandhu, the erstwhile commander of the Raja of Khurda. He, like most of his militia had suffered on account of the resumption of Jagir lands and the machination of the Bengali Amlas. The dispossessed militia men of the Raja raised the standard of rebellion in relentless fury as if "to threaten the expulsion of the British from the whole of Orissa". The injustice of the British government forced Jagabandhu to keep the smouldering fires of rebellion ablaze till 1825 when due to the superiority of arms the Government could successfully suppress it.

This rebellion was not merely an act of violence in which the Paika alone took part. It was a crusade, the object of which was to expel the English from all interference with the land of `Purusottam Chutter` (Puri). Since the civilian population of a vast area stretching from Banpur in the south up to Kanika in the north and Puri in the east, up to Baud and Dasapalla in the west had joined in the upsurge, historians believe it to be the first war of Independence. Another school of historians consider it to be a peasant's revolt. Be that as it may, the first few years of misrule, apathy and disrespect for the local institutions caused great resentment among the people, who having been driven to desperation took resort to an armed struggle under Bakshee Jagabandhu.

Aftermath

However, the Paika rebellion was a turning point in the history of Orissa, the years of administrative experiments were over and the period of consolidation began. From 1803 to 1805 Orissa had been placed under the administration of two Commissioners (Harcourt and Melville) who exercised powers unfettered by any regulation. This was a period of observation

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when they enjoyed wide powers. From 1805 to 1817 Cornwallis's Judicial, Revenue and Salt Regulations were introduced in Orissa without making the people ready to appreciate the sudden change. Under the new system of administration local institutions, old usages and traditions were ignored. The consequences were found to be disastrous. The Sadar Board of Revenue, therefore wrote to the Court of Directors : "The chief defects in the administration of Cuttack, in our judgement, flowed from a too precipitate introduction of a system of government entirely new to the people". (Bengal Revenue Selections, Revenue letters from Bengal, 17.7.1818)

Realising that the Cornwallis system of administration was unsuitable to Orissa, the Government took measures to introduce changes through a special Regulation (No.V) passed in 1818. Orissa constituted a Commissioner's Division with Robert Ker as the first incumbent and the Board of Revenue hoped that the superintendence of Ker over the executive administration would go far to remedy the defect. On Ker's recommendation the Regulation XIII of 1818, was passed which stipulated restrictions on the sale of estates for default of payment or for arrears. He introduced a triennial settlement, suspended Chowkidari tax and reduced the price of salt.

In 1819 the Sadar Board of Revenue initiated measures to restore several small estates to their original proprietors. This helped in reinstatement of some of the old landed aristocracy. The Government tried to root out corruption by drawing proceedings of suspension against several Amlas. Major Fletcher, a very important officer, was branded for incapacity and dishonesty. Even Edward Impey, formerly Superintendent of Tributary Mahals was dismissed from service. Thomas Coopens, the Head Writer at the Judge's Court, Cuttack, was prosecuted for embezzlement. For similar charges Goldsbury, a Deputy Collector, lost his job and Forrester committed suicide. These measures followed by strict vigilance led W. Forrester to write in 1821, that "The people at present did not suffer from any severe oppression of the amlas" (Toynbee). More money was spent on the repair of

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embankments than before, with steps taken to prevent misappropriation. The Judiciary was also toned up. By increasing the frequency of Circuit Courts the difficulties of the witnesses and prosecutors in the criminal cases could be removed.

In 1828, for better administration, Orissa was divided into three Divisions : Northern, Central and Southern, each under a Magistrate-cum-Collector. By Regulation I of 1829, Orissa was made the 19th Commissionership of Bengal Presidency comprising Balasore, Cuttack and Puri districts. The Commissioner of Orissa also functioned as the Superintendent of the Tributary States. Thus the structural foundation of the future British administration in Orissa was laid and order could be restored.

But organisational changes introduced by the higher authorities in Orissa were mainly to ensure a steady flow of wealth to the British treasury. The company drained the resources of Orissa by way of land revenue, monopoly and excise. It is evident from Ewer's report that the average annual remittance from Cuttack was approximately 7½ lakh of Siccas to Calcutta. Admitting the motives of early British administration W.W. Hunter wrote :

> In 1803 when the country passed to ourselves, we did not venture to spend very much on our acquisition. We placed a Collector, or his subordinate, in the three district capitals, and told him to get as much and spend as little as he possibly could. (Orissa, Vol-II, 1872)

Within a few years the income of the Government began to swell which by 1825 could reach a staggering amount of Rupees 30 lakhs excluding all expenses. The total expenditure of the establishment came to Rupees 5 lakhs only. By 1858 when the Company's rule was superseded by the Crown administration, the annual income had reached Rupees 58 lakhs out of which about 20 lakhs was spent on running the government. Thus, on an average, the Company took away from Orissa 38 lakhs of Rupees every year, progressively reducing the people into the miseries of poverty and ruination. Since no steps were taken for either material or moral welfare of the people, their future prospects

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appeared totally bleak.

With the introduction of Crown administration Orissa was at peace during the remaining years of the 19th century and was administered with comparative ease. Her placidity was misconstrued by the Government as a sign of contentment. While in other provinces measures were adopted to improve the administration and economic conditions of the people, Orissa suffered gross neglect due to complacency of the government. Even the Tributary States being inaccessible were allowed to grope in their seclusion. It is difficult to believe how such an enlightened government could afford to neglect the welfare of a people living so close to Calcutta, the seat of imperial administration.

Disadvantages

One of the chief disadvantages from which Orissa suffered in the 19th century was the lack of communication facilities. Intersected by large, untamed rivers the countryside posed great problems for want of a network of roads. Her only link with Calcutta was through the sea. In reality, Orissa was isolated from the rest of India. The Government evinced no interest to improve the primitive condition of the Jagannath Road on which pilgrims from the North moved towards Puri. Describing the deplorable state of communication Sir George Campbell (the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal appointed as the Famine Commissioner to investigate the causes of Orissa Famine, 1866, and suggest remedial measures) wrote "The people, shut up in a narrow province between pathless jungles and an impracticable sea were in a condition of passengers in a ship without provisions." (Buckland 1901). The once flourishing ports on the Orissa coast, at Balasore, Dhamra, Harispur, Puri and Manikpatna had declined rapidly and were unsuitable for navigation. Their decline had adversely affected the maritime trade having a direct bearing upon the economic condition of the people. Export trade of rice and salt from these ports had come to an end. The disadvantages of their decline and disuse could be felt no sooner than 1866 when acute scarcity of foodstuff leading to the great famine made the Government

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realise their necessity. When steamers loaded with rice reached the ramshackle ports there was neither any safe anchorage nor unloading facilities for an expeditious disposal of essential commodities. It was still more difficult to transport rice from the ports to the famine-striken areas where no semblance of road existed. This slowed down relief operation allowing the famine to take a heavy toll of human life (One million people died).

The administration of Orissa was entrusted to irresponsible officers who governed without thought or foresight. The executive power was indifferent and ineffective: The Executive reigns but does not govern. As it was understaffed there was a clear tendency to avoid interference in the affairs of the people. Most of the administrative business was entrusted to the Zamindars who functioned as sort of intermediaries between the government and the people. The Collectors and their subordinates lived in ivory towers widening the gap between them and their subjects. Another factor which made this gap unbridgeable was the growing distrust for Indian hands since the time of Cornwallis and the appointment of Europeans in Government service. But as it became difficult to employ Europeans against increasing vacancies due to the heavy cost involved, the Government preferred to run with scanty staff. Dearth of officers apart from effecting the efficiency of the administration failed to ameliorate the grievances of the people. The combination of the office of Collector with that of the Magistrate or that of the Commissioner with the Superintendent of Tributary States of Orissa, was probably asking for too much from one man. Particularly, in Orissa due to its remoteness and inaccessibility the European officers were greatly handicapped. One example will make the point clear. In January 1866 when the districts of Orissa were in the grip of a famine, T.E. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner, was away in Mayurbhanj on tour. His long absence from the headquarters besides keeping him out of tune with the development, delayed prompt action against the impending crisis.

That, there was no communication between the famine afflicted people of Orissa with the higher authorities was evident

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during the visit of Sir Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, to Cuttack and Puri. In a public Darbar held at Cuttack on 17 February, 1866, where twenty Rajas, eighty Zamindars and many officials and non-officials were present no one ventured to make him realise the gravity of the situation. Even at Puri where he saw the famished crowd, he remained unconvinced about the seriousness of the famine. Stunned at this stoical unconcern of the Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Lawrence, the Governor-General later on remarked:

> It seems to be incredible that all the different individuals with whom he personally conversed should have been altogether silent at such a momentous period, and that they should have given no expression to the anxious fears and doubts which they cannot but have felt. But at any rate the very clamour from the starving multitude, which beset him at Puri, ought to have led him to make special inquiry, which could not have failed to lay bare the real condition of the people at that very time. It was certainly the duty of the Lieutenant Governor to have done this. (Minutes of Sir John Lawrence, 20.4.1867)

Apart from the apathy and negligence of the local officers, the rampant illiteracy and lack of consciousness among the people were equally responsible for aggravating the tragedy. No other province in the Presidency was so deficient of intelligent and public spirited residents who would appreciate the fact bearing on the prospects and means of the people, and who could give practical information to the authorities in carrying out remedial measures. The Government merely looked upon Orissa as an appendix of Bengal, and as a source of revenue. They paid no attention either for the growth of education among people to make them enlightened, or to provide irrigation canals to meet natural calamities like drought. In the field of education Orissa was so utterly neglected that even Henry Ricketts, the Commissioner (1835-1840) assailed the Government's deliberate policy to perpetuate the backwardness of the Oriyas. It is incredible to believe that

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the whole province with an area of 52,995 sq. miles and a population of 4,534,813 had only 77 schools of low categories with 3500 pupils (M.N. Das, 'Sidelight', P.179). The Christian missionaries did pioneering work by establishing an English Charity School at Cuttack in 1823. But the Government did not take any step to further the cause of English education. The prayer of the people of Balasore for an English school was turned down in the 1840s. Even the famous Woods Despatch of 1854 failed to usher a new age in Orissa. The proposal of G.F. Cockburn, the Commissioner, for creating a separate post of Inspector of Schools for Orissa and the establishment of several schools along with a Normal School for the training of teachers were turned down by the Lieutenant Governor. The people had to remain contented with three High Schools in the three District headquarters of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri. Collegiate education was a day- dream for the Oriyas as Calcutta alone offered them the opportunity. But Calcutta was an expensive place besides being far away from Orissa and the journey was most unsafe. Such discouraging state of affairs thwarted the educational appetite of the Oriyas, seriously impeding their intellectual growth. They became devoid of a sense of awareness to their problems and grievances, much less gathering courage to fight for their redressal. They failed to understand the Bengal Regulations of the Cornwallis system and under compulsion remained reticent. This attitude proved suicidal to their cause. Lastly, the people suffered because capital and labour were controlled by outsiders. Orissa remained a "neglected benighted province" (Boams, /Memoirs' p.212). The situation led to increase of wealth outside the agricultural community with increasing poverty within.

It is unfortunate that in an agricultural province like Orissa, the British Government did not take interest to ensure a steady income for the peasants from their fields. Notwithstanding the manifold disadvantages of short-term settlements, they introduced in 1837 a settlement for 30 years. On expiry of the period the term was extended to a further period of 30 years i.e. upto 1897. These experiments in revenue administration adversely affected

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the prospect of agriculture by throwing the peasants into a state of prolonged misapprehensions. The thirty year settlements gave rise to doubts and uncertainties and the peasants felt disinclined to improve agriculture. Advertently or inadvertently the Government precipitated a crisis.

Though drought was caused by the failure of nature to provide adequate rains, the catastrophe of 1866 caused by the failure of monsoon could have been tackled through an ever-vigilant administrative machinery. The famine ruthlessly exposed the inherent defects of British administration in Orissa. It was the culmination of a long period of neglect and indifference. It may very well be regarded as the epitome of the unsympathetic administration of the British. The Government when forced to investigate into the causes of the unprecedented tragedy observed that the territorial vivisection of the Oriya-speaking tracts prevented the marshalling of resources to tackle the emergency. Lack of roads, railways, ports, navigable canals and above all a lack of understanding of the need of the people, also played their part. But be that as it may, the great famine cast an indelible stigma against the British Raj. Bemoaning over the failure of the Government Sir Stafford Northcote, the Secretary of State for India concluded in 1867, that :

> This catastrophe must always remain a monument of our failure, a humiliation to the people of this country, to the Government of this country and to those of our Indian officials of whom we had perhaps been a little too proud. At the same time, we must hope that we might derive from it lessons which might be of real value to ourselves, and that out of this deplorable evil good of no insignificant kind might ultimately arise. (Buckland, 'Bengal', p.386)

The famine of 1866 became another turning-point in the destiny of Orissa. Report of the Famine Commission brought home the truth that administrative indifference coupled with practical difficulties of administering Orissa under three separate provincial administrations (Bengal, Madras and the Central Provinces) was

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at the root of this catastrophe. Northcote would suggest a regrouping of the Oriya-speaking territories as a measure of reducing the danger of administrative neglect of a country regularly ravaged by natural calamities like flood and famine. But it was easier said than done. The Oriya-speaking people were in a most unenviable state; a proud race with rich cultural heritage in art, literature, painting, religion and maritime trade, were condemned politically and forced to live without education, without a vernacular press and without an elite class to provide leadership. Orissa was merely a geographical expression, a *terra incognita*; "to the English administrators it was a veritable Boetia thrown at the tail end of their respective domains which needed not much attention, and to the people of Orissa, it was a land striken by fate, reduced to the lowest dregs of poverty and hopelessly dismembered". (Mohanty, 'Madhusudan', p.8)

To redeem such an Orissa Madhusudan Das was born in 1848.

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CHAPTER - II

GROWTH OF EDUCATION AND VERNACULAR PRESS

Lack of educational facilities in Orissa retarded her social and intellectual growth during the rule of the East India Company. After the disastrous famine of 1866 English education made slow but steady progress. Some sympathetic bureaucrats like John Beams and T.E. Ravenshaw made significant contributions in this regard. Realising the importance of Western system of education the Oriyas and the domiciled Bengalis came forward in increasing number to join the schools and the college. This led to the growth of an educated enlightened class of people who provided social leadership and political consciousness to the Oriyas.

Orissa was one of the most backward areas when she came under the British rule. Centuries of maladministration had shattered her zeal for intellectual activities. The children up to a particular age were educated in the village schools where they were taught the 3Rs and made to memories medieval Kavyas and Puranas. But such education neither helped in their mental growth nor qualified them for any employment under the Company's Government. Even as late as 1821 the Magistrate of Cuttack regretfully noted: "Scarcely a single real Oriya received a salary of more than ten Rupees mensem xxx. I always give preference to the Oriyas, but at this moment I scarcely know a single Oriya possessing qualifications to fit him for being a common scribe" (O'Malley, 'Bengal', p.257-258) The Oriyas were averse to English education up to 1838. The annual allotment of Rupees

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one lakh for educational progress as made in the Charter Act of 1813 was spent for Bengal only, with Orissa having no share in it. Therefore, "throughout the length and breadth of the province with its population of two and a half million of souls all was darkness and superstition". (Hunter, `Orissa`, Vol.II p.145)

The Christian missionaries deserve much praise for their pioneering efforts to spread education in Orissa. On their arrival at Cuttack in 1822 they established the first English school; simultaneously they also started raising funds to help the indigenous Oriya schools. Though they hoped to promote education as preparatory to the reception of the Gospel they printed text books in Oriya and English through the School Book Society at Calcutta for facilitating the growth of education. With evangelical zeal they established schools at Balasore, Puri, Berhampur and Sambalpur. But these schools could not bring any perceptible change in educational statistics since apprehending conversion people chose to be away from them.

It was only from 1835 the Government evinced some interest in educating the people of Orissa through Zilla Schools or English Schools. In November 1835, the Puri Zilla school was started with 25 students. But this had to be closed down in 1840, as in a city of conservatives and orthodox Hindus many students did not come forward to join the institution. In 1841 the Government sponsored an English School at Cuttack which could survive through numerous difficulties. The English school at Balasore was established in 1853 and the Puri school was also revived. These schools served as the nucleus for the spread of education in Orissa. Demand for English education gradually increased as was evident from the Government record

> Numerous applications are daily made for admission indicative of the estimation in which the benefits of education are held by the natives; but owing to a strict enforcement of the rules all are not entertained. (`Report of the Committee on Education`, p.297)

It was observed that due to poverty many Oriya students found difficulties in pursuing their studies. The increase in tuition fees

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was another factor responsible for many drop outs. Government introduced the system of awarding prizes to meritorious students on the basis of their results to help them to tide over poverty. Those who sought employment had no reason to feel disappointed because they could be promptly absorbed in Government jobs. This gave a tremendous fillip to the cause of English education and attendance in schools began to increase. Strength of the Cuttack School alone in the year 1851-1852 increased from 91 to 122.

During the Governor Generalship of Lord Hardinge eight vernacular schools were set up in Orissa - at Khurda, Puri, Balasore, Remuna, Kendrapada, Bhadrak, Hariharpur and Mahanga, with a view to improve the standard of the native schools. But as the fees charged for those schools was on the higher side most parents withdrew their wards. This prompted G. Gouldsbury, the Commissioner, to suggest that poor students should get free education and fees should be charged only from those who could afford to pay. He was convinced that employment opportunities would attract students to the schools provided jobs were assured to the educated natives. He took personal interest in appointing the Oriyas in preference to the Bengalis and contrary to the advise of Henry Ricketts, the Member, Sadar Board of Revenue, retained Oriya as the Court language in Orissa. These steps had an encouraging effect upon the Oriyas.

But the real fillip to the growth of education was provided by the famous Woods Despatch of 1854, which laid down the modern educational system in India. Apart from putting emphasis on mass education and female education, the new policy stipulated financial help for government as well as non-government institutions. By giving grants to private bodies or local committees for setting up and maintenance of educational institutions, the new policy tried to ensure uniform standard in private and government schools. A special Department of Education was created in Bengal under one Director of Public Instruction for periodic inspection. The University of Calcutta also came into being to provide University education.

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Primary Education

In Orissa the number of schools began to multiply rapidly from 1855 when at Angul and Talmul they were set up. In 1857 the schools of Jarrah and Balramprasad, and in 1858 those of Banki, Charchika and Suvarnapur were established. Within a couple of years Tangi, Banpur and Bhubaneswar got such schools. For the supervision of the schools the Commissioner asked the government to create a separate Inspectorate for Orissa, otherwise, he feared, "there is little chance of any progress being made in educating the people of Orissa" (28.7.1856). Besides this, he pleaded for a Normal School at Cuttack where teachers would be trained to improve the standard of the native schools. Since the number of village schools and students had reached the figure 2074 and 15,547 respectively, there was ample justification for creating a separate Inspectorate of Education for Orissa. The Government, therefore, appointed E. Roer as the first Inspector of Schools in 1857. But his schemes for a Normal School and some Model Schools, in Orissa, the printing of Oriya text books, giving of monetary awards to meritorious students and teachers were not accepted by the authorities, and ultimately the post of Inspector was abolished. G.F. Cockburn, the Commissioner feeling very soar about it wrote : "It must be remembered that as yet, education at all in Orissa is in its infancy and xxx lacs and lacs of rupees having been spent in almost every Division of Bengal, except Orissa" (Letter to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, 23.2.1859)

In the 1860s there was a remarkable change in the situation when in orthodox society of Puri and Bhubaneswar people felt inclined for English education and sought admission for their children. In 1863-64 the number of schools in the three districts was only 44, out of which 24 were run by the Government and 20 ran under the grant-in-aid scheme. In addition to these there were 10 schools under the management of the missionaries. When demand for admission increased, the local officers of the Government felt encouraged to establish some schools, e.g. Sreenath Ghose, the Deputy Magistrate of Bhadrak, and Pandit Biswambar

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Vidyabhusan, the Munsif at Jajpur, took measures to start new schools in their respective areas.

The Normal School of Cuttack rendered valuable service to improve the standard of education in Orissa. It turned out trained teachers for the ever-growing elementary village schools. In 1869 the School underwent certain organisational changes and was named as 'Cuttack Training School' where the teachers were induced to undergo training on payment of stipends. This school was held in high esteem by the people and the way the native Abadhanas were trained under a sophisticated system pleased the general public.

It was the Campbell Scheme of 1872 of Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, which could popularise education among the masses. Campbell Scheme tried to establish a sound and simple system of primary education in the province. It stipulated to give financial grant to encourage 3Rs in the village schools where instruction should be imparted in the medium of local language. Instead of appointing high salaried or highly trained teachers in such schools, the village teacher should be given grant-in-aid provided he allowed his school for periodic inspection. Wherever the people expressed a desire for education, the Government would patronise the establishment of schools and sanction grant-in-aid. Campbell's idea was to involve the people in the system, besides encouraging local language to popularise education. The scheme aimed at extending primary education by subsidising the village schools.

Another bold measure of Campbell was the provision of 410 scholarships for primary schools for which a sum of Rupees 29,520 was set apart annually. The rate of scholarship was Rupees Three, tenable for a period of two years. He divided the scholarships among the districts proportionately on the basis of total primary schools each district had. This offered a great opportunity to a primary school student to prosecute his studies in higher classes.

Campbell bestowed upon the District Magistrates the responsibility of promoting primary education. He provided them

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Deputy Inspectors of Education to supervise the schools and implement the grant-in-aid. In the Sub-Division level, Sub Inspectors conducted periodic inspection. In 1873 one Joint Inspector of Schools was provided for Orissa to assist the Inspectors and two years after, Orissa having been separated from Burdwan Division, was placed under his independent charge. The strength of sub-ordinate staff was also proportionately increased.

The number of subsidised village schools began to increase slowly. Out of 4364 schools in 1872, only 182 received Government grants due to fear and misgivings about the actual designs of the Government. Due to gross superstition the people were at a loss to understand why the Government was keen to aid their schools. At times a teacher trained in Normal School would be rejected by the villagers, and students would run away from their schools on the sight of Sub-Inspector. However, in 1874 the number of subsidised schools rose to 832, benefiting 15497 students. These schools were accommodated in proper houses, had regular curriculum taught by teachers who attended schools daily and felt obliged to the Government. The system undoubtedly ensured better discipline and public money was not spent in vain. As a result of the Campbell Scheme there was a phenomenal growth of schools and students in the Division. The following statistics would make the position clear :

Year	*Total No. of Schools*	*Total No. of Pupils*
1873-74	905	19,396
1879-80	6,814	81,304
1889-90	8,073	1,22,846
1899-1900	9,351	1,88,956

Secondary Education

There were two categories of schools imparting Secondary education- the Middle Schools and the High Schools. In the Middle Schools English was taught as a subject and these were called the Anglo-Vernacular Schools. The Higher Schools or the

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Higher English Schools adopted English as the medium of instruction and prepared students up to the Entrance standard. Orissa had 3 Higher English Schools, 12 Middle English and 30 Middle Vernacular Schools with a total of 2527 students in 1872. From 1877 the Middle English Schools had Oriya vernacular as the medium of instruction and all text books were in the language. To ensure the standard of Secondary education the Government in 1878 entrusted the supervision of the Middle English Schools to the care of the Deputy Inspectors, leaving primary education to the care of the Sub-Inspectors.

Secondary education made very slow progress in Orissa. Due to poverty and orthodox outlook many people did not come forward to sustain Secondary schools on private/non-government support. Only inducement which operated in drawing people to these schools was the allurement of Government jobs. But the decision of the Government to leave secondary education in the hands of local bodies and private agencies impeded its growth. The Government did not take into consideration the economic backwardness of the region while formulating above policies. Orissa had only 12 High Schools and 82 Middle English Schools at the turn of the century with 2394 and 4244 students respectively.

One of the greatest impediments in the field of educational growth was the non-availability of adequate text books in Oriya language. On June 20, 1842 the Bengal Government entrusted the printing of Oriya text books to Amos Sutton, a Missionary of Cuttack and Biswambar Vidyabhusan, a teacher in the Cuttack Zilla School. Biswambar's books on Oriya Grammar and Arithmetic were published in 1841 and 1846 respectively. In 1839 Rev. Sutton had published his books on History and Geography. But the rate in which the Oriya books made their appearance was deplorably slow and inadequate. In twenty years - from 1840 to 1860 - only seven Oriya books could be made available to the students. In 1866 a 'School Book Company' was set up at Cuttack by Kalipada Banerjee for printing text books, but it failed to render satisfactory service. At last Ravenshaw took pains to establish an 'Oriya Text Book Committee' in November 1869

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with Rev. Lecy as President and Maharaja of Dhenkanal, Bichitrananda Das and Banamali Singh as Members. He further took measures to collect a list of all available Oriya books by 1873 for submission to Bengal government for selection of suitable ones for the schools. Afterwards the paucity of Oriya text books gradually disappeared. Radhanath Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Madhusudan Rao and Govind Rath wrote series of books to meet the growing demand, which apart from meeting a long felt desideratum immensely helped the growth of modern Oriya literature.

Collegiate Education

One of the direct outcomes of the famine of 1866 was the beginning of Collegiate education in Orissa. Earlier to that the aspirants for higher education in Orissa were often disappointed; as the city of Calcutta, where Colleges had been set up by the government and non-government agencies, was far away and expensive. The situation prompted the following remarks from E. Burton :

> The boys of Orissa labour under peculiar disadvantages. They come up to the Entrance examination and there is an end to their educational career. The want of a college tells severely upon the boys' subsequent career, such a want is prejudicial to the result of the Entrance examination also. (General Report on Public Instruction, 1864-65, p.250-259)

Though the number of the students who passed Entrance Examination was not encouraging enough to justify the necessity of setting up a College, the people had an eye on the Cuttack Zilla School which they wanted to serve as the nucleus of Collegiate education in Orissa. W.W. Hunter, the Inspector of Schools, while bestowing fulsome praise upon the brilliant performance of the students of this School, expressed favourable views for promoting Collegiate education in a most neglected area. The Director of Public Instruction, therefore agreed to open the Collegiate class in the Cuttack Zilla School as a prelude to the growth of higher education In April 1867 the proposal got the sanction of the Government

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and the annual budget for the School was increased from Rupees 3616 to Rupees 12,000 "with the view of placing the institution on the footing of a College of the lower class to supply the means of obtaining University education in the province of Orissa." (Proceeding of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, May 1867, No.37) The provision of Collegiate education in January 1868 was a significant landmark in the history of Orissa. That year only 6 students who had passed the Entrance examination joined the first year class. Next year the second year class was opened while 10 students got admitted in the first year class. The strength gradually increased setting at rest the fear that Collegiate education would not be popular.

In converting the Cuttack Zilla School to a full-fledged College, the keen interest evinced by T.E. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner, was commendable. He impressed upon Sir Richard Temple, the visiting Lieutenant Governor, the necessity of having B.A. classes for the aspirants of higher education and to overcome the disadvantages of Oriya students who could not afford to go to Calcutta for the purpose. Sir Richard approved the request of Ravenshaw on condition that a sum of Rupees 30,000/- should be collected from public donation to run the college. That did not pose any problem for Ravenshaw who had the assurance of the Oriya Rajas and Zamindars for liberal contribution for such a noble cause. In January 1876 the college was opened with S. Ager, a former Joint Inspector of Schools for Orissa, as the first Principal. It was prophetically announced; "The Cuttack College, properly equipped, will civilize Orissa" (General Report on Public Instruction, 1878-79, p.20). In fact, the establishment of a Degree College at Cuttack, the nerve-centre of Orissa, was the fulfillment of a long cherished desire of the Oriya people. Maharaj Krushna Chandra Bhanj of Mayurbhanj donated Rs.20,000/- for the college and at his request the college was named after Ravenshaw in commemoration of the latter's contribution to the growth of education in Orissa. It met one of Orissa's main social desideratum; the gates of Western liberal education were now thrown open to the Oriyas. Since then the College played a significant role in

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spreading higher education in Orissa, turning out every year groups of educated youngmen who provided much-needed leadership in different fields in Orissa.

A further step was taken in 1881. That year the Law Department was started in the Cuttack College which prepared students for BL degrees. In 1891 Postgraduate classes were opened. Thus the College maintained a perennial flow of graduates, post-graduates, and Law graduates. The leading news paper **Utkal Dipika**, therefore, noted with great satisfaction that in the first twentyfive years the college produced 4 MAs, and 94 BAs and 23 Law Graduates who attained high positions of Professors, Pleaders, Deputy and Sub-Deputy Collectors, Munsif, Inspector and Deputy Inspectors of Schools and Teachers. The paper said, "It is with pleasure we notice that the Oriya graduates and under-graduates are adorning the country" (24.8.1901). Had there been more High Schools in Orissa these figures could have further increased.

Since there was great scope for medical education in Orissa, Dr. Stewart, the Civil Surgeon of Cuttack, initiated the move for establishing a Medical School, and himself to work as an instructor on honorary basis. On Ravenshaw's pressure the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal agreed to finance the proposed School for which he sanctioned Rupees 3000 only. The Medical School was opened on 15 February 1876, with 38 students in the first batch. Due to the untiring efforts of Dr. Stewart, the Medical School made satisfactory progress justifying Ravenshaw's hope that the products of the school would bring a material change in the Oriya society. The School not only trained surgeons, but also female nurses and soon grew up as a popular institution in the province.

Ravenshaw's foresight led to the establishment of the Cuttack Survey School in 1876, where vernacular was the medium of instruction. There was no problem for the students who successfully passed out of this School to get employment. In 1891 as many as 41 students were on the roll of the school. For training the Oriya boys in various crafts and mechanism there were

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Technical Schools at Balasore and Jobra (Cuttack). Some students went to Sibpur Engineering College, Calcutta, and the Calcutta Art School. Female education too made some progress. The opening of Cuttack Hindu Girl's School in 1869 at the residence of Abinas Chatterjee, in Balubazar at Cuttack, was a significant development in the growth of female education in Orissa. Started with only 6 students as a Lower Primary School, it received financial grant from the Government during the time of Ravenshaw. In 1875 there were as many as nine girl schools, five at Cuttack, one at Puri and three at Balasore. These schools had 967 girl students on the roll, most of whom, however, were Bengalis. It appeared that there was no strong desire in the Oriya society to give higher education to the girls. The establishment of separate classes for girls in the Boy's primary schools gave an incentive to female education, which of course, remained restricted to the primary standard. In 1887 a Sub-Inspector was appointed specifically for inspecting the Girls' Schools. Towards the end of the last century Orissa had 111 Girls' Schools with 6062 students and the highest standard upto which female education progressed was Middle Vernacular. The conservative attitude of the parents and prevalence of child marriage system impeded the rapid growth of female education in Orissa. The scarcity of lady-teachers was also no less responsible for this.

However, immediately after the famine of 1866 material changes took place in the field of education in Orissa, yielding far-reaching results. Orissa was not destined to wallow in the backwater of illiteracy and ignorance anymore. The society got a steady flow of English educated men, who forming an elite class strove to bring a social resurgence. They created an awareness about the problems and sufferings of the Oriya people and mounted pressure upon the Government against apathy and injustice. Their demand for the loaves and fishes of the Government jobs also became irresistible. Orissa seemed to be entering into a new phase of history.

At the initial stage few Oriyas could occupy positions of high social status. In 1841 Pandit Biswambar Vidyabhusan joined

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Government service as a teacher. He was promoted as Munsif of Jajpur in 1851. Among other educated Oriyas who got employment in various capacities were Rudreswar Panda, Achyut Sahu, Nabin Chandra Sarangi, Bhagirathi Mohanty, Jaykrushna Mohanty and Atmaram Nanda. They preferred teaching jobs in the schools. Some Commissioners like Stockwell, Ricketts, Mills, Gouldsbury and Cockburn showed special favour to the educated Oriya community by taking them in Government service in preference to the Bengalis. During Henry Rickett's Commissionership several Oriyas joined administrative posts as Deputy Collectors and Amins. Even without any formal education, Sadananda Jachak, Sapneswar Das, Nimai Charan Neogee, Rasbihari Patnaik and Sadananda Singh were recruited to junior administrative posts in consideration of their experience and efficiency.

After 1866 the ratio of Oriya employees in the Government service began to increase which was due to the growth of education. Most prominent among them were Durgacharan Sahu, Balaram Das, Gopalballav Das, Chaturbhuja Patnaik, Chandra Mohan Maharana, Abhiram Bhanja, Gobind Rath, Chaturbhuj Das, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Nanda Kishore Das and Nanda Kishore Bal. Notwithstanding the protection and patronage of the Commissioners the educated Oriyas had to struggle hard against the Bengali competitors who were better equipped academically. The competition for survival generated an intense feeling of race consciousness among the Oriyas. The educated elite class began to think in term of 'Oriya race', 'Oriya culture', 'Oriya literature', 'Oriya country', and 'Orissa for the Oriyas'.

This consciousness was projected through contemporary Oriya literature; - in the writings of Gouri Shankar Ray, Radhanath Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati and Gangadhar Meher. These writers wrote essays, novels, criticism, poems and autobiographies in prodigal abundance. Their writings ushered modern age in Oriya literature.

The Press

The contributions of vernacular press in building up race-

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consciousness among the Oriyas cannot be underestimated. Printing machine was brought to Orissa by the Christian Missionaries in 1837 for their own purpose and was set up at Cuttack as the Mission Press. They published several periodicals, viz. **Jnanaruna** in 1849, **Probodha Chandrika** in 1856 and **Arunodaya** in 1861 to propagate Christianity. These publications, however, were not aimed at providing an impetus to the growth of Oriya nationalism. During the famine of 1866 the necessity of a Press to project the problems and views of the Oriya people was realised by Ravenshaw. He persuaded his Seristadar, Bichitrananda Das to set up a Press and start a Paper for the purpose. Accordingly, Das took initiative to establish the Cuttack Printing Company in 1866 and sponsored the weekly newspaper **Utkal Dipika**. Since then under its redoubtable editor Gauri Shankar Ray, **Utkal Dipika** played a commendable role in highlighting the grievances of the Oriya people, analyzing the policies and measures of the Government and often publishing healthy criticism of the various measures. The paper identified itself with the interests of the Oriya community for long 67 years till 1933, and can justifiably be considered as the most important mouth-piece of the Oriya-speaking people. It drew the attention of the Government to the famines, economic exploitation, growing poverty, decline of ports, lack of communication facilities, problem of education, necessity of railways, need for more employment of the Oriyas, better amenities in the Ravenshaw College and amalgamation of scattered Oriya-speaking tracts. It inculcated the spirit of enquiry into the existing conditions and systems, a nostalgic appreciation of the past heritage and infused new ideas and aspirations for the future. The premises of the Cuttack Printing Company became a veritable meeting place for different groups of men caught in the intense cross currents of new ideas - where socio-political views were freely exchanged. In short, the **Utkal Dipika** and the Cuttack Printing Company served the cause of Oriya nationalism as no other paper or Press had ever done in the 19th century. By his deep insight into the growing sense of disappointment of the Oriya race caused by decades of administrative apathy and political dismemberment,

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the editor Gauri Shankar through analytical, but inspiring writings tried to rescue his countrymen from the stupor of ages.

In 1868 Fakir Mohan Senapati started Utkal Printing Company at Balasore wherefrom **Sambad Vahika** was published regularly to formulate public opinion of the people of Balasore on leading issues of the period. Raja Baikunthanath De set up the second Press at Balasore to sponsor the publication of **Utkal Darpan**, a periodical. In course of time several enlightened persons established Utkal Hitaisini Press, Arunodaya Press, Utkal Sahitya Press and the Victoria Press at Cuttack; the Sudhal Press at Bamanda; Printing Corporation Press at Puri and Mayurbhanj Press at Baripada. The multiplication of these printing establishments was an indication of the increasing demand of the reading public and the prodigious abundance of publications in proportion to the growth of educated persons in Orissa.

It is interesting to observe that the towns of Balsore and Cutack being the main centres of the emerging Oriya elite, the Presses located there could operate with much success, whereas other Presses failed to survive for long. In Western Orissa the Press founded at Bamanda by Raja Sudhal Deb played a significant role in articulating public opinion through the weekly paper **Sambalpur Hitaisini**, edited by Pandit Nilamoni Vidyaratna. This paper kept the smouldering fire of Oriya nationalism ablaze in the Western Orissa at the most critical juncture of history when Oriya culture and language of Sambalpur were threatened with the danger of extinction. There was no Press at Sambalpur, the district headquarters. In 1895 a serious language crisis cropped up in the region when the Government of the Central Provinces decided to abolish Oriya as the Court language substituting it by Hindi. **Hitaisini** fought against the machinations of the Hindi chauvinists by mercilessly exposing the fallacies of their views which had prompted the Chief Commissioner to substitute Hindi in place of Oriya. At one stage Nilamoni, the editor, advocated vigorous public agitation against the impolitic and unjust order of the Chief Commissioner. He successfully engineered the move for the amalgamation of Sambalpur with Orissa Division.

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In 1902 Harihar Mardaraj Deo, the Raja of Khallikote launched a powerful paper **Prajabandhu** to project the grievances of the Oriya-speaking people administered under the Madras Presidency and to inject in them a national consciousness. He chose Nilamoni Vidyaratna as the editor. **Prajabandhu** succeeded in affecting a national resurgence in south Orissa by awakening the Oriyas against Telugu-chauvinism and the policy of discrimination practiced by the Madras Government. The success of the Ganjam National Conference held in April 1903 could be justifiably attributed to the facile pen of Nilamoni. The Oriya weekly **Swadeshi** sponsored by William Mohanty also contributed immensely to the cause of Oriya nationalism in Ganjam.

However, the growth of Press as the vehicle of information and wisdom was the harbinger of a new age. If in 1866 Orissa had one Press, in 1900 the figure reached 15. Though this number was insignificant in comparison to what availed in Bengal, the part these Presses played in galvanizing a moribund people was amazing. An analysis shows that during 1866-70, there were only six periodicals in circulation in Orissa, out of which four failed to survive. During 1871-80 the number of periodials increased to sixteen and most of them were for literary purposes. In the decade following 1881, twenty two periodicals could be available for the reading public. Though these publications catered to the requirements of numerous categories of readers- political, social, missionaries, reformers, writers, literary critics etc., they gave vent to the ideas of a healthy and dynamic society caught by a new wave of national awakening.

In course of time the Press concentrated on two leading public issues : (i) construction of railway lines in Orissa, and (ii) the amalgamation of all Oriya-speaking tracts under one administration. The educated people of the time placed due emphasis on these two issues, because growth of national consciousness would naturally urge for material welfare and political identity. So far, Orissa was treated as an appendix of Bengal, a territorial bridge between Calcutta and Madras. She did not have a separate political identity of her own. The demand for railway lines connecting

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Orissa with Calcutta and Sambalpur with Khurda/Puri began soon after the famine of 1866. Raja Baikunthanath De of Balasore had tried to draw the attention of the Government of Bengal to this issue through a memorial submitted in December 1882. In 1892 the Commissioner of Orissa realising the necessity of the railway communication expressed his regret over its absence. In 1892-93 the survey work for the East Coast Railway started and the tracks were laid from the following year. The project could be completed in 1899 only.

The East Coast Railway conferred upon Orissa manifold advantages. Apart from reducing the distance between Cuttack and Calcutta and removing the hazards of sea voyage, this Railway could bring the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal closer to his subjects in the Orissa Division for better appreciation of the latter's problems. Further, it flung open the doors of University education to the Oriya students through whom the latest socio-political ideas of progressive Bengal began to infiltrate into Orissa. Lastly, the export and import trade could greatly improve leading to better economic condition.

The other issue which kept the Press in Orissa deeply engaged was the question of amalgamating the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts under one administration. Apprehension of a possible loss of identity and extinction of Oriya language and culture due to their minority status in Bengal, Madras and the Central Provinces had its genesis in the language crisis. As a remedial measure the Oriya-speaking people in the 1870s evinced a desire for amalgamation. In 1870, the **Utkal Dipika** highlighted an appeal by one Janardan Das of Ghumsur against the local Oriyas being ill-treated by the Telugus. The editor called upon the Oriyas of Orissa Division to make a concerted move against such maltreatment. The **Prajabandhu** from Rambha subsequently took up the cause of amalgamation of Ganjam and other Oriya-speaking areas under Madras Presidency with Orissa.

The earnestness and vigour with which the movement for amalgamation was conducted by the Oriya Press in the last quarter of the 19th century stirred public opinion as had happened

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never before, but failed to make a real dent in the attitudes of the Government. Not that the bureaucrats serving in British administration were oblivious of the historical wrong committed against the Oriya-speaking people by keeping them artificially divided. In 1855 Henry Rickets, as Member of Sadar Board of Revenue (formerly a Commissioner of Orissa) considered it prudent to amalgamate Sambalpur with Orissa Division on commercial, administrative, linguistic and racial grounds. Along with Sambalpur, he suggested Sonepur, Rairakhol, Patna, Bodasambar, Khariar, Bindra Nayagarh, Saranggarh and Phuljhar should also be transferred to Orissa Division.

The failure of the Governmental machinery to tackle the famine situation in 1866 led Sir Stafford Northcote, the Secretary of State for India, to suggest a regrouping of the Oriya-speaking territories as a measure of reducing the risk of administrative neglect of a country so often ravaged by natural calamities. Further, in 1894-95 H.G. Cooke, the Commissioner of Orissa Division, submitted to the Government of Bengal to permit additional territories inhabited by the Oriya-speaking people towards creating a homogenous administrative unit under his charge. He specifically mentioned the inclusion of Sambalpur and the adjacent tributary States, and the Ganjam district along with the states of Kimedi and Ghumsur. But the British Government did not take any note of these suggestions. What the Oriya Press criticised as detrimental to the political, economic and cultural interests of the people, was considered to be administratively unsound and morally unfair by the rulers. The first decade of the British rule in Orissa had started with bitter disillusionment, which in the last decade of the 19th century turned into great frustration. The educated elite could realise the main cause of their suffering, and began to pulsate with a new consciousness. Education provided a tongue into the mouths that were dumb before; the educated classes were merely the spokesmen of their community. The Press gave both depth and dimension to the popular resentment against a century of inaction.

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Emergence of Madhusudan

By education and temperament Madhusudan Das was destined to pilot the ship of the Oriya race through the uncharted sea of neglect and frustration. He was the son of Choudhury Raghunath Das of Satyavamapur in the Cuttack district. The Choudhurys were an ancient Khandayat family whose fortune had set with the British occupation of Orissa due to the Sunset Laws. According to the provision of this Law if the annual rent of an estate was not deposited in the Treasury on the Scheduled date, the state would be auctioned away in Calcutta without giving any notice or intimation to the proprietor. Though they lost their opulence, they retained the traditional reverence of the village people towards them. Raghunath managed the family as a small-cause lawyer in the Cuttack Court and remained happy with his proud heritage. His wife Parvati Devi was a deeply religious lady who left an indelible imprint upon the emotional life and character of their son Madhusudan. They had two daughters and two sons; the first two were daughters, Madhusudan was the third child and the youngest was Gopalballav. The early education of Madhusudan was completed at the village school, and after passing the Middle Vernacular examination at Mahasingpur, a nearby village, he came to Cuttack for higher school education. In 1864 he passed the Entrance examination at his sixteenth year.

Since the financial condition of his father was going from bad to worse, Madhusudan could have joined against any Government post for a satisfactory living and promotions in due course. Raghunath had no means to send his son to a college in Calcutta. Notwithstanding the hard realities, Madhusudan was determined to go for the highest English education available in the country. The frustrating experiences of Gourishankar Ray and Radhanath Ray who had to return from Calcutta before completion of their studies due to the high cost of living, could not have any deterring influence on Madhusudan. English was the language of administration, and a high social status could be available to those who had the highest English education to their credit. The indomitable desire to carve out for himself a high place in the country induced Madhusudan

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to proceed to Calcutta. On his way he came to Balasore, in 1865, and joined as the third teacher in the District School for a short period. Shortly before Orissa fell into the grip of famine, Madhusudan reached Calcutta through the sea route by a steamer.

The fabulous city of Job Charnock was beyond the comprehension of young Madhusudan. Whatever money he had was spent away in no time. Reduced to utter poverty and exhaustion he reached the portals of the London Missionary Society College at Bhowanipore where Rev. J.P. Ashton, the Superintendent of the College, seeing his distressful condition not only admitted him to the college, but also sanctioned an allowance of eight rupees per month towards the cost of education.

Madhusudan passed F.A. in 1868 and B.A. two years after, to become the first graduate of Orissa. After completing his post-graduation (M.A. in English) in 1873 he took up the job of Headmaster of Gardenreach High School and simultaneously studied Law. On the successful completion of the Law course in 1878 he joined the bar at Alipore.

Madhusudan was the first Oriya M.A. and B.L. degree-holder and the first Oriya Advocate. During his sojourn in Calcutta he developed a fascination for Christianity, like most of his contemporaries, and much against his father's desires became a Christian. In 1873 he got married to Saudamini, a Christian girl, who was his fiancé since the college days. Both led a very peaceful and unostentatious family life for only five years when sudden demise of Saudamini did upset Madhusudan completely. He did not marry again. He was a man of great moral principle, courage and strength of character. With an indomitable spirit and critical acumen he made the best use of his years of stay in Calcutta. He drank deep from the fountain of Western culture and found it an exhilarating experience. The philosophy of Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill made a deep impression upon his mind. He watched with absorbing interest and admiration the political movements in Italy and Germany which culminated in their respective unifications. This naturally worked as a strong persuasive force for him, particularly as related to the conditions

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in Orissa, and there was no reason to feel happy about his own place. With the death of Saudamini his attachment with Calcutta was snapped. Though he could have prospered well through the legal profession, he preferred to return home. Orissa was in need of him, and the time was ripe. In 1880 he came back to Cuttack and set up an independent legal practice in a bar which welcomed him with mockery, because it was monopolised by the Bengalis, and he was an intruder.

With his enlightened outlook acquired through Western education, Madhusudan silently observed the sufferings of the Oriya people, who had for long endured economic exploitation, political injustice and social stagnation. Education had made little progress in them, thanks to an apathetic administration. Madhusudan was mortified to find that the Oriyas were strangers in their own land Through vicissitudes of history they had been so much demoralised and crushed that they had come to accept their poverty, exploitation and autocratic excesses as the decrees of a benevolent fate. The deep humiliation which he suffered in the Bar, where the Bengali colleagues refused him a place to sit, and even a glass of drinking water, touched in him a very sensitive and powerful chord. By training and temperament he was most suitable for a career of leadership which the emerging Oriya elite was eagerly looking for. As the leader of the Oriya elite for the next forty years he did play his role with crowning success.

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CHAPTER - III

GROWTH OF ORIYA NATIONALISM

The second half of the 19th century provided adequate stimulus for the growth of Oriya nationalism; particularly the language agitation which could generate a strong consciousness in favour of the Oriya language and culture. A new outlook dawned alongwith sense of pride in their own rich heritage. Poets, novelists, social workers and journalists contributed whole-heartedly to this cultural renaissance. There was a mushroom growth of associations to serve numerous objectives - social, cultural and political, which gave great impetus to the growth of Oriya nationalism.

A Survey of the Vernacular Languages of India conducted by G.A. Grierson in 1896 noted as follows

> The Orissa country is not confined to the Division which now bears that name. It includes a portion of the district of Midnapore in the North which together with part of Balasore was the 'Orissa' of the phrase "Bengal, Bihar and Orissa" met in the regulations framed by the Government in the last decades of the 18th century. Oriya is also the language of most of the district of Singhbhum, belonging to the Division of Chota Nagpur, and of several neighbouring Native States which fall politically within the same Division. On the west it is the language of the greater part of the district of Sambalpur and of a small portion of the district of Raipur in the Central Provinces and also of the number of Native States which lie between these districts and Orissa proper. On the south, it is

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> the language of the North of Madras district of Ganjam with its connected Native States and of the Jeypore Agency of Vizagapatam. It is thus spoken in three Governments of British India, viz. in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, in the Central Provinces and in the Madras Presidency. (The Linguistic Survey of India, Vol.V, Part-II, p.367)

Oriya language and script took their present form as early as the 13th and 14th centuries during the rule of Imperial Gangas. From 15th century commencing with Sarala Das till the advent of the English, a large number of poets and writers enriched Oriya literature by their contributions. In 1801 and 1811 respectively, H.T. Colebrooke and Walter Hamilton, two great Indologists, had recognized the distinctive features and high quality of Oriya literature. Other English scholars who appreciated the antiquity and richness of Oriya as a major Indian language were Andrew Stirling, W.W. Hunter and John Beams. Admitting the distinctiveness of Oriya the missionaries, for easy publicity, took measures to translate many religious books in the language.

In view of the above, the British approved the use of Oriya as an official language in Orissa Division along with Persian. For better understanding of the problems of the people such policy was always helpful to the administration. The rules and regulations of the Government were let known to the people through their own language. Besides, the officers were often advised to learn the language of the people they governed. On 18 August 1837, a Circular order of the Commissioner stipulated the recording of the proceedings of Criminal Courts in Oriya language. Next year a list of those Deputy Collectors who did not know either to read or write in Oriya was prepared. Henry Ricketts, the Commissioner, asked the Deputy Collectors of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore to pass a language test in Oriya since it was to be used in all official correspondence. The use of Oriya language in all judicial records was ordered through a Circular of the Sadar Diwani Adalat and the Sadar Nizamat Adalat dated 5 July 1837.

Amos Sutton, a missionary, was appointed to translate the

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Judicial records of Cuttack Courts from Parsi, Urdu, and Bengali into Oriya. Subsequently, two more translators were appointed. On 5 October 1841 the Government of Bengal expressed their desire to acquaint the people with various rules and regulations through a Gazette to be published in local language. Accordingly A.J. Mills, the Commissioner proposed to appoint Amos Sutton for editing the Oriya Gazette on a salary of Rupees 300 per mensem. Later on the Oriya Gazette was edited by C. Lacey and his son W.C. Lacey successively. That such patronage of Oriya language was in the interest of the people is known from the correspondence of Mills. In 1839 he informed the Sadar Board of Revenue that the Court proceedings at Puri being recorded in Oriya was immensely beneficial to the public.

This language policy of the Government, however, failed to serve as an impetus to the cause of Oriya language due to an acute shortage of Oriya text books which impeded the growth of education through Oriya medium. The Education Committee of Cuttack had no alternative but to suggest to the Government that Bengali text books available in plenty should be translated into Oriya for use in the schools. The paucity of Oriya text books prompted the Inspector of Schools to recommend that Bengali be made the medium of instruction in schools. Accordingly, Bengali was introduced as the medium of instruction by Bowring, the Collector of Cuttack, in the schools at Kendrapada and Mahasingpur. In 1848 the Collector suggested to the Commissioner

> The Ooriah of this district, whatever it may originally have been, is now but a dialect of Bengali; from which it differs chiefly in pronounciation, and in its written character. xxx I would submit as a measure of general policy, it is desirable that the Ooriah should cease to exist as a separate language within the British territories. (Board of Revenue Records, 27 June, 1849)

But such a change in policy, the Commissioner realised, was fraught with the danger of substituting the Bengalis in place of the Oriyas in the Government jobs and should be discouraged.

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As a compromise formulae some officers mooted the idea of introducing Hindustani in the Courts and schools of Orissa. Ignoring the advice of G. Gouldsbury, the Commissioner and E. Roer, the Inspector of Schools, the educational authorities allowed the introduction of Bengali in place of Oriya in 1864-65. Furthermore, the Director of Public Instructions did not make any provision for the publication of Oriya text books which he considered to be an infructuous expenditure. Roer's vigorous advocacy for supplying Oriya class books failed to move the Government; and a pro-Bengali strand in the educational policy began to threaten the Oriya language in spite of its grammar, idioms and rich literary heritage.

It was an opportune moment for the Bengali officers and Amlas to perpetuate their hold over the affairs and administration in Orissa through a clever manipulation of the situation. They lost no time to gear up the bureaucratic machinery in an attempt to obliterate Oriya language and culture. A deliberate and systematic effort was made to publicise Bengali as a rich and superior language of which Oriya was but a mere local patois. They took the cue from an initial move in this regard taken by Bowring, the District Magistrate of Cuttack who in 1847 had observed that for administrative convenience Oriya should not continue as a separate language of a small unit; it would be beneficial if Oriya could be written in Bengali script. He further stated that Oriya was a derivative of Bengali language.

Umacharan Halder, a Bengali Deputy Inspector of Schools who came to Orissa in 1864 on reversion from a higher post in Midnapore due to misconduct, advocated the use of Bengali script for the Oriya language. He published his views in the **Cuttack Star** without anticipating the bitter public controversies his statement would provoke.

In Orissa, due to the aversion of the Oriya-speaking people to English education (till 1838) almost all the Government jobs were monopolised by the English-educated Bengalis. These men were neither willing to learn Oriya language nor liked to educate their children through that medium. Being influential men in the

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Government they consistently adopted a hostile attitude towards the Oriya language. In 1870 Kanticharan Bhattacharya, a Bengali teacher of Balasore High School, published a monograph expounding the thesis that Oriya was a mere dialect of the Bengali language, and not distinctly separate from it.

The views of Kanticharan got further support from the scholarly exposition of Rajendralal Mitra, an eminent Bengali historian of Calcutta, who in course of a lecture delivered at the Cuttack Debating Club in December 1868, stated that no useful purpose would be served by trying to defend Oriya as distinct from Bengali. He further harped on the issues like the poverty of the Oriyas, non-availability of Oriya books for the schools and the necessity of adopting Bengali in place of Oriya. In his opinion, "The Uriya, instead of being a self contained and independent member of the Aryan Indian Vernacular is more closely and intimately connected with Bengali". **(Utkal Dipika,** 26.3.1870) Such views of eminent scholars led the Director of Public Instructions to suggest to the Government the futility of printing Oriya text books. A group of Bengalis at Balasore carried on a signature campaign in favour of their language with Sibdas Bhattacharya, the Deputy Inspector of Schools, as the leader of this clandestine move. Other proponents of introducing Bengali in place of Oriya were Rajkishore Mukhopadhyay, a Law teacher of Cuttack, and Trailokyanath Mukhopadhyay of Jajpur who suggested withdrawal of any support for a dying out language like Oriya.

A great public controversy raised its head over such anti-Oriya statements in 1869-70, drawing into the vortex of conflict the members of both the communities. It was heartening to observe that the domiciled Bengalis of Orissa tried their best either to remain aloof from the controversy or rallied round the cause of Oriya language. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, a noted Bengali academician and writer, mercilessly exposed the misconception of Kanticharan Bhattacharya, stating that Oriya, Assamese and Bengali had close similarities on account of their common origin. John Beams, the Collector of Balasore studied the problem from a scientific angle and established the historicity of Oriya language

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and grammar. In his opinion, "At a time when Uriya was already a fixed and settled language, Bengali did not exist". ('Comparative Grammar', Vol.I, p.119).

The language controversy took a very serious turn due to the organized attempts of rival communities to espouse their respective cause. While the 'Cuttack Society' and the 'Cuttack Debating Club' organised the Bengalis in an anti-Oriya campaign with the **Utkal Hitaisini** of Kalipada Bandopadhyay as their publicity media, the Oriya cause was championed by 'Ullasini Sabha' and powerful writers like Gauri Shankar Ray and Fakir Mohan Senapati. Ray branded Rajkishore Mukhapadhyay, the Law teacher, as a 'sheep' for his lack of wisdom. Through the scathing editorials of the **Utkal Dipika** and **Samvad Vahika**, both Ray and Senapati could successfully stimulate a national feeling among the Oriyas against the machinations of the Bengalis. The language crisis fostered a strong race consciousness among the Oriyas, who now realised that their political redemption depended upon the safety of the Oriya language and culture. It is this love for their mother-tongue which boosted up brisk literary activities giving birth to modern Oriya literature. Besides, the emergent Oriya nationalism became manifest in 1870 when the Oriyas of Balasore town petitioned against Sibdas Bhattacharya, the Deputy Inspector, and got him transferred. Atkinson, the Director of Public Instruction was publicly condemned as 'Kalapahad' for his pro-Bengali attitude, in 1874, when he visited Orissa. The Oriyas hereafter, more often than not, took a concerted move to prevent the imposition of Bengali, thereby exhibiting a growing concern for their problems and welfare.

The language crisis in the Orissa Division tended to subside towards 1872 when the Bengal Government acknowledged Bengali, Assamese and Oriya as separate languages. Bengali ceased to find a place in the educational institutions of Orissa forcing the Bengalis to learn Oriya language. Even teaching of Bengali was not allowed. The domiciled Bengalis did not resent learning the language of the land of their adoption. This catholicity of temperament gave fillip to healthy emotional integration and a large number of

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Bengali elites enriched modern Oriya literature by their prolific writings. Radhanath Ray, Ram Shankar Ray, Peari Mohan Acharya, Sitanath Ray, Dwarakanath Chakravarti, Nimai Vallabh Vidyasagar, Krishna Prasad Choudhury and Raja Baikuntha Nath De were some prominent members of the domiciled Bengali elite class who immensely helped the growth of Oriya society and culture in very many ways. The social tension of the 1860s gave way to a new era of harmony and progress. Peari Mohan Acharya wrote the first History of Orissa in Oriya language which became extremely popular among the grown-ups and the children alike, inculcating in them a sense of pride in the past history and glorious heritage of Orissa. The educated people began to talk of 'Oriya race' and 'Oriya culture' and projected the same national consciousness in their writings.

Associations

By serving as a breeding ground for the formation of many socio-cultural associations in Orissa the language-crisis served another useful purpose for the growth of Oriya nationalism. Like the vernacular press these associations came into existence as public forum to project different strands of opinion and rendered valuable service in the social life. Their formation apparently marked the gradual progress through which the society in Orissa was advancing.

Though the 'Mutual Improvement Society' of Cuttack formed by the Englishmen was the first social organisation in Orissa, the origin of Oriya associations could be traced to the famine of 1866 when some leading public men of Cuttack town formed a 'Rice Selling Company' with a view to serve the famine- striken people. This Company was organised by Harekrushna Das and Iswar Chandra Banerjee. But the real source of inspiration for organising associations was the desire of the Oriya elite class to protect their mother-tongue from Bengali chauvinism. Accordingly, the first socio-cultural association to make its appearance in 1866 was the 'Utkal Bhasa Unnati Bidhayini Sabha' of Balasore. Fakir Mohan Senapati, Radhanath Ray, Bholanath Samantrai, Damodar Prasad

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Ray and Joykrushna Choudhury were the members of this Sabha. Those Bengalis who were trying to introduce their script and language in Orissa formed the 'Cuttack Debating Club' in 1869 which sponsored the anti-Oriya campaign of scholars like Rajendralal Mitra. Thereby Cuttack Debating Club stimulated great public controversy and tension. The Bengali Zamindars had formed the 'Cuttack Society' to serve their own interests. Its Secretary was Kalipada Banerjee. The Cuttack Society patronised a Library, a Press and two weekly newspapers, the **Utkal Hitaisini** in Oriya and the **Orissa Patriot** in English. There were no Oriya members in this association and the **Utkal Dipika** had alleged serious charges of misappropriation against its Secretary, apart from stating that the Society did not serve the Oriya cause. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner, made an unsuccessful attempt to merge together the Cuttack Debating Club, Cuttack Society and Utkal Bhasa Unnati Bidhayini Sabha under one association to be named as the 'Orissa Society' In doing this he tried to bring harmony between the Oriya and Bengali communities. The 'Utkal Bhasa Uddipani Sabha' which came into existence in 1867 was mostly an association of the aristocrats of Cuttack town with three main objectives : (i) to improve Oriya language, (ii) to introduce it in the Government offices and (iii) to get the Oriyas appointed against Government jobs. For its noble endeavour, the association was highly praised by the **Utkal Dipika**. In fact this association compiled some Oriya text books, succeeded in introducing chaste Oriya language in official business and furnished a list of Oriya writers to the Commissioner.

In the Oriya society the members of the Karana caste were the first to avail the benefits of Government employment since 1835. Narasingh Charan Das, Chaturbhuj Patnaik, Madhusudan Patnaik, Brahmananda Das, Dinabandhu Patnaik and Harekrushna Das etc., who served as Deputy Collectors were of Karana caste. On 1 January 1869 Narasingh Charan Das initiated the move of forming an association for the collective improvements of the Karana community. This came to be known as 'Karana Sabha'. The association strove to remove certain caste prejudices

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and reduce ritual expenses during marriage and other functions.

A study of the nature and objective of various associations shows that Cuttack was the main centre of brisk social activities where associations were formed by the students ('Cuttack College Students' Association' and 'Orissa Graduates and Undergraduates Sabha'), the Christians, ('Christian's Association'), the Muslims ('Orissa Islam Association'), the Brahmos ('Utkal Brahmo Samaj'), and the Kayasthas ('Kayastha Sabha') for the improvement of Oriya language, eradication of corruption to enforce prohibition and to ensure the spread of education. At Balasore the 'National Society' (Established, 30 June 1878), 'Baikunthanath De Social Club' (Established, 1 June, 1898), the 'Mahammedan Association' (Established, 11 January 1896), and the Balasore Branch of Brahmo Samaj played vital role in organising the public life. The orthodox people of Puri set up the 'Puri Society', 'Puri Students Association' (1882) and other organisations which served the cause of Sanskrit studies and Jagannath cult. Ganjam, Bhadrak and the headquarters of the tributary States (at Dhenkanal and Talcher etc.) also saw the emergence of organized public life to improve community interests. Commenting upon this new development in Orissa the **Utkal Hitaisini** wrote "Orissa is gradually being flooded with societies in the Western style. There are societies of school founders, societies relating to social and political issues involving the youths, the exciting societies of Pandits, school teachers and even old people are adorning this town of Cuttack". The following associations were formed at Cuttack 'Mutual Improvement Society' (1859), 'Rice Selling Company' (1866), 'Utkal Bhasa Uddipani Sabha' (1867), 'Cuttack Debating Club' (1869), 'Cuttack Society' (1869), 'Karana Sabha' (1869), 'Cuttack Young Men's Association' (1869), 'Cuttack Vidyadhyapani Sabha' (1869), 'Cuttack Bhagabata Samaj' (1873), 'Utkal Sabha' (1877), 'Cuttack Suhrud Samaj' (1878), 'Cuttack College Students' Association' (1882), 'Orissa Association' (1882), 'Orissa People's Association' (1873), 'Orissa Graduate and Undergraduate Sabha' (1888), 'Kayastha Sabha' (1890), 'Cuttack Union Club' (1891), 'Cuttack Reading Club' (1892), 'Orissa Sanskrit Samity' (1893),

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'Students' Social Club' (1896), 'Orissa Christian's Association' (1896), and 'Utkal Union Conference' (1903).

Such organised public life while facilitating radical social changes and a progressive outlook, also helped the emergence of political associations like the Utkal Sabha and the Orissa Association. In fact the former was the precursor of the latter. The Utkal Sabha was initially an association for literary discussions with Gopal Chandra Dutta, a domiciled Bengali as the Secretary. It met twice a year under the chairmanship of eminent academicians and men of letters to discuss literary topics. In 1879 the members of the Sabha heard Peari Mohan Acharya's discourse on national life. From 1881 the character of the Sabha began to change further when Madhusudan Das appeared as the leader of the Oriya elite class at Cuttack. He joined hands with Gauri Sankar Ray, the editor of **Utkal Dipika** and other like-minded persons to organise and educate the people on contemporary political issues. Madhusudan and Gauri Shankar transformed the Utkal Sabha into a political association by widening its objectives and increasing the frequency of meetings. Since then the Utkal Sabha concerned itself with important political issues like the Local Self Government Scheme of Lord Ripon that had been introduced by Ripon to educate Indian elite in the act of Self-Government. In 1883 the members discussed the controversial Ilbert Bill and passed resolutions calling upon the Government to bestow such judicial powers upon the Indian Judges which would enable them to try the European offenders of law. Since then the Utkal Sabha or as it was also called the Orissa Association, provided a much needed forum for the conveyance and articulation of the political thinking and aspirations of the people of Orissa.

In course of time the Orissa Association concerned itself more and more with the specific problems of the Oriyas instead of general issues concerning the whole country. Probably Madhusudan's stewardship was responsible for this new orientation. In 1885, he became the Secretary of the Association and its Vice-President from 1888. He served the organisation in that capacity for a long period of fifteen years remaining as the undisputed

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leader of the Oriya people. The Orissa Association resorted to public discussions on various grievances affecting the people, and memorialising the Government for their early redressal. In a meeting of the Association held in 1884, Madhusudan pressed upon the necessity of expanding the canal system for irrigation purposes and also as prevention of droughts and famines. The meeting was attended by the Commissioner who got an opportunity to understand the agrarian problems besetting Orissa. During the visit of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to Cuttack in 1885 Madhusudan, on behalf of the Orissa Association, presented a memorial, demanding among other measures, extension of railways, agricultural development, spread of industries and industrial education for the benefit of his countrymen. The amalgamation of outlying Oriya-speaking tracts under the Central Provinces and Madras Presidency with the Orissa Division was given due emphasis in the memorial. From now onwards the amalgamation issue was accorded top priority among the public demands spear-headed by Madhusudan through the Orissa Association. On 17 November 1888, he presented an Address of Welcome before Sir Steward Colvin Bayley, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, drawing the latter's attention on (i) to the difficulties experienced by the transfer of Salt Administration Headquarters to Madras resulting in the loss of employment opportunities for the Oriyas and reduced production, and (ii), disadvantages of keeping the Oriya-race politically divided under three separate Provinces. Elaborating the maladies of Orissa Madhusudan stated:

> The isolated position of Orissa, owing to want of facilities for communication and the absence of foreign capital and foreign enterprise which have contributed so largely to the development of manufacturing industry and have furnished means of livelihood to the labouring class in other parts of India make distress and scarcity to be felt more by the people here than they are felt in any other tracts within Your Honour's rule. Railways, the most important and potent factor in the civilisation of the world, has not yet been introduced in Orissa.

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> though its ancient cities attract more visitors every year than any city elsewhere in twenty years.
> It is no wonder that Orissa was most backward in intellectual advancement and material prosperity. We sincerely hope that Your Honour will give us the Railways and thus open the road to Orissa's material prosperity and intellectual advancement which the canal system has not accomplished.
>
> The transfer of Salt Department from here to Madras Government has affected the interest of labouring classes by depriving many thousands from earning their livelihood. xxx
> At a time when it is proposed to transfer a portion of Central Provinces to the Bombay Presidency, we feel it our duty to solicit your Honour's attention to the fact that the tract of the country where the Uriyas reside is anomalously placed under the administration of Madras, Bengal and the Central Provinces Governments. We would therefore, ask Your Honour to place the territorial limits where the Oriya language is spoken under one administration and thus knit together under one administration a large population which speaks one language and have the same tradition and customs.

It was probably not possible for Sir Bayley to adopt prompt measures ameliorating the problems outlined in the Address of Welcome. But his comments upon the issue of amalgamation appeared most disastrous. Notwithstanding the sound reasons advanced by the Orissa Association for amalgamating the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts, Bayley summarily dismissed the idea as 'ridiculous' without even trying to justify his stand.

Expressing the bitter public feeling the **Utkal Dipika** reported that the "Darbar congregation was disappointing" and the "Lieutenant Governor was most unsympathetic"

Language Agitation in Sambalpur

The language agitation in Sambalpur caused by an unfair

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and impolitic decision of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces gave an opportunity to the Orissa Association to try its strength. The Central Provinces was a Hindi-speaking province with only one exception, i.e. the Sambalpur district where the people spoke Oriya. In the government records, the district was therefore, mentioned as an 'Oriya country' The official business was transacted in Oriya language. This linguistic difference between Sambalpur and other districts of the Central Provinces where Hindi was the official language gave rise to certain administrative difficulties. It prevented the transfer of officials; Oriya employees of Sambalpur resisted their transfer to Hindi-speaking districts and the Hindi-speaking employees found it inconvenient to function in a non-Hindi district like Sambalpur. Further, the Government observed that the Oriya employees were forming small groups of vested interests due to a prevailing custom of 'Mahaprasad'. Mahaprasad is the holy food offered to Lord Jagannath in the Puri temple. Two persons willing to be friends swear eternal friendship by feeding each other a very small quantity of Mahaprasad. Thereafter they become close friends and call each other as 'Mahaprasad'. The Mahaprasad custom, apart from cementing friendship between two or more persons was actually a sort of offensive and defensive alliance for nepotism and corruption. Besides affecting the general efficiency of the district administration, the custom made detection of crime difficult. It was therefore considered desirable by the Government to substitute Hindi in place of Oriya as the official language in Sambalpur. The Government felt that since the Oriya language spoken in Sambalpur was a local dialect, more akin to Hindi, the people would welcome such a change. A successful integration of the district with the province through a change of official language would remove the insular outlook of the people.

Prompted by the above consideration, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces through the Resolution No.237; dated 15 January 1895, declared that Oriya be replaced by Hindi as the official language of the Sambalpur district. The order stipulated maintenance of official records in Hindi and employment of

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Hindi-speaking officials. Those who did not know Hindi were required to learn it forthwith. Hindi became the medium of instruction in the schools. Non-Hindi teachers were required to learn Hindi at Raipur failing which they were retrenched.

Contrary to the expectation of the Chief Commissioner that the substitution of Hindi in place of Oriya as the official language would be a welcoming change for Sambalpur, the people of the district reacted strongly to the new language policy. The **Sambalpur Hitaisini**, edited by Pandit Nilamoni Vidyaratna, published from the adjacent tributary State of Bamra, gave expression to the public resentment and called upon the Oriya-speaking people to agitate against bureaucratic tyranny. While strongly commenting upon the language policy of the Government, the editor, sincerely believed that the Chief Commissioner would see reason by learning from the recent language controversy in the Orissa Division where some Bengali officers arbitrarily tried to impose Bengali as the medium of instruction in schools and introduce the Bengali script. He successfully roused the apprehension of the Oriyas that their language and culture were in grave crisis. The situation demanded strong and concerted public action against the language policy of the Government. A large number of letters to the Editor, to the leading public men of Sambalpur, and appeals to the Government were published creating an unprecedented mass consciousness. Inspiring poems of poet Gangadhar Meher called upon the people to rally for the cause of the mother tongue and Oriya culture. Dharanidhar Mishra, (First matriculate of Sambalpur District), a representative Oriya elite of Sambalpur, organised public meetings in the towns and villages to mobilise strong public opinion against the unpopular step taken by the Government. He even submitted a lengthy memorial to Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, analysing the fallacy of the language policy and demanding its abrogation.

The language agitation of Sambalpur had its echo in the Orissa Division. The leading newspapers of Cuttack and Balasore, viz., the **Utkal Dipika** and **Sambad Vahika**, vehemently criticised the Resolution No.237 dated 15 January 1895, as "impolitic, unjust

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and arbitrary' The Oriya press gave the language issue both depth and dimension by urging upon the Oriya-speaking people to unite and fight for their language and culture. Series of lengthy editorials published in these papers exposed the misconceptions of the Government.

The elite class of Cuttack town held a public meeting on 3 May 1895, with Madhusudan Das as the President, to record their protest against the imposition of Hindi, emphatically demanding the restoration of Oriya as official language. On 20 June, Madhusudan as the President of the Orissa Association, sent a memorandum to Lord Elgin explaining the richness and the distinctiveness of Oriya language. He drew the attention of the Viceroy to the status of Oriya as an official language under Bengal Presidency. The memorandum contended that it would be unfair to punish the entire Oriya community of the district for the alleged corruption and nepotism of a few employees; that the language policy was against the idea of natural justice, and against the spirit of British administration, because a vast community should not be forced to learn the language of a few officials. To Madhusudan, the language policy was an extremely cruel measure and the worst type of gagging.

Since Madhusudan was the chief spokesman of the Oriya-speaking people, Dharanidhar Mishra and other leading men of Sambalpur desired that the former should raise the language question in the British Parliament during his proposed visit to England. He should convey their feelings personally to the British people and their leaders. Madhusudan visited England in 1897. During his sojourn in London Madhusudan met eminent public men and administrators like Sir William Wedderburn, Sir Charles Dilkie and Sir George Hamilton among whom he circulated a monograph **A Brief Account of Orissa under British Administration**. The monograph was a gross exposition of maladies caused by the apathetic British administration, with a poignant note which said that "The Government will have to make amends for the wrong done to Orissa"

Notwithstanding these steps Oriya was replaced by Hindi

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as the official language of Sambalpur with effect from 1 January 1896, causing great hardships to the local people. It exercised an injurious effect upon the mental faculties of the Oriya children. Gradually the number of Hindi teachers began to multiply at the cost of Oriya schools and Oriya teachers. The doors of Government employment remained closed for the sons of the soil. With the importation of increasing number of Hindi-speaking officials discontentment among the Oriyas began to swell. The people again resorted to memorialise the Viceroy in 1901, complaining against the violation of the Government of India's instruction to restrict the number of non-Oriya officers imported to Sambalpur and the arbitrary manner in which 82 Oriya Primary Schools in the district had been closed ('Madan Mohan Mishra's Memorial'). Though the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces subscribed to the views that, "it was necessary for the welfare of the district and its officials that Oriya should be stamped out as far as it lies within the power of the Government to do so", he was forced by Curzon, the Viceroy, to examine the veracity of the allegations about the closure of 82 Primary schools. Curzon was an avowed champion of vernacular as the medium of instruction in the primary schools for which he asked the Chief Commissioner to reconsider his decision regarding the restoration of Oriya as official language of Sambalpur.

Andrew Fraser, the Chief Commissioner, was obliged to give a close look at the language issue. He found out that the imposition of Hindi had failed to make itself popular among the Oriyas. Further, maintenance of official records in a language unknown to the people concerned had generated much corruption and practical hardships. He therefore suggested that Hindi and Oriya both should be recognised as languages of the Court. But this was hardly satisfying to the Oriyas. They made another courageous move to realise their aim. A small delegation waited upon Fraser at Nagpur to convince him that the Oriyas of Sambalpur were culturally and ethnologically related to the main stock in the Orissa Division. Therefore, as a measure to overcome the administrative inconveniences caused by retaining only one Oriya-

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speaking district in a Hindi-speaking province they should better be transferred to the Orissa Division under Bengal. The same delegation decided to wait upon the Viceroy at Simla in September 1901 on the occasion of an All-India Educational Conference. Madhusudan Das could not lead this delegation to Simla due to some unavoidable difficulties. He despatched a lengthy telegram to the Viceroy on 2 September drawing the latter's attention to the "impolitic and impractical" order of the Chief Commissioner in substituting Oriya by Hindi as the official language of Sambalpur. He further, endorsed a copy of the memorandum which he had submitted to Lord Elgin, on 20 June 1895, as President of the Orissa Association. Curzon gave due weightage to the request of Madhusudan who was informed that the Viceroy was waiting for a report from Fraser to take a final decision in the matter.

Fraser visited Sambalpur in the last week of September and after a careful and thorough enquiry into the grievances of the people submitted his famous Note, dated 5 October 1901. He found that, (i) the people were keen on getting their children educated in Oriya, (ii) the closing of 82 primary schools was a mistake, and (iii) there was no demand for Hindi. Since 4/5 of the total population of the district was Oriya-speaking, he concluded

> The Government ought not, except on the plea of absolute necessity to compel the people to give up their mother tongue xxx. What I am convinced of, is this, that Uriya and not Hindi ought to be the Court language of Sambalpur, and that, in that case, Sambalpur ought to be joined with Orissa to which it really belongs.

The Government of India had no reason to reject the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner. Accordingly, orders were issued cancelling the Resolution No.237, dated 15 January 1895, and restoring Oriya as the official language of Sambalpur with effect from 1 January 1902. The success achieved by the people after a prolonged struggle for a just cause was indeed gratifying. It led to great rejoicings in Sambalpur and everywhere

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in the Orissa Division. The people and the Press conveyed to the Viceroy and the Chief Commissioner their profound gratitude for a fair decision.

Amalgamation of Sambalpur with Orissa

How the successful conclusion of the language agitation in Sambalpur led to the amalgamation of the district with Orissa Division is an interesting study. Andrew Fraser's suggestion that "Sambalpur ought to be joined with Orissa to which it really belongs", did not go in vain. On completion of the East Coast Railway in 1899, Orissa could be linked up with Calcutta. This was a milestone in the history of the province as it could be brought nearer to the seat of Supreme Government for a better appreciation of its problems. The first Viceroy ever to visit Orissa was Lord Curzon, who fascinated by her archaeological monuments visited Bhubaneswar and Puri on 16 December 1900. On this occasion Madhusudan got an opportunity to acquaint the redoubtable Viceroy with the rich cultural heritage of Orissa and the maladies caused by her political dismemberment.

Curzon was then preoccupied with the problem of a territorial reorganisation of the Indian provinces, most of whose territorial size he considered to be 'antiquated', 'illogical' and "productive of inefficiency". He was bent upon fixing "the provincial boundaries for the next generation" Since the idea to reduce the stupendous size of Bengal was uppermost in his mind it was uncertain if he would entertain Fraser's proposal to accommodate Sambalpur as an additional burden for the Government of Bengal. Fraser, therefore, had proposed an alternative; entire Orissa Division with the district of Sambalpur would be added to the Central Provinces whose Chief Commissioner would administer a large homogenous unit consisting of the Oriya-speaking people (Note dated 5 October, 1901). The leading public men of Orissa were divided on this issue. A section of Oriya people considered it more advantageous to be governed as a part of the backward Central Provinces where the Oriyas would not have to compete with the highly educated and advanced Bengalis. (This section was led by G.

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White and George Howell, two European Misionaries) But Madhusudan vehemently opposed this move. As leader of the Orissa Association he led a delegation to wait upon the Commissioner of the Orissa Division. (The delegation consisted of Madhusudan Das, (Leader) R.N. Bhanjdeo, Gouri Shankar Ray, Ram Sankar Ray, Gokulananda Choudhury, Abhiram Bhanj, Rafiuddin Muhammad, Ekram Rasul and Iswarlal Parwar) Krishna Govinda Gupta, I.C.S. was the Commissioner. In his opinion the accession of Orissa with the Central Provinces would be detrimental to her progress. Orissa should better remain with Bengal to avail the advantages of the Calcutta University, the High Court and the employment opportunities which the city offered. The Government of India also entertained similar views because during the past one hundred year's close administrative contact the association of Orissa with Bengal had grown stronger. Further, the East Coast Railways which linked up Cuttack with Calcutta by a most convenient line of communication in 1899, promised better administration for the neglected province.

The mission of Madhusudan was partially fulfilled in December 1903, when the famous Risley Circular (Letter from H.S. Rislay, Secretary, Home, Govt. of India to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Bengal, 3.12.1903) of Lord Curzon proposed to amalgamate all the Oriya-speaking tracts under Bengal. In the Circular the Government of India stipulated that considering the question like "race, language, administrative convenience and territorial integrity" Sambalpur with five adjoining Oriya Tributary States (of the Central Provinces), Orissa Division and a part of the Singhbhum district of the Chhota Nagpur Division (of Bengal), and Ganjam district, Ganjam Agency and Vizagapatam Agency tracts (of Madras Presidence) should be amalgamated together to form a homogenous unit in the Bengal Presidency. This would ensure a linguistic and cultural integration of the scattered Oriya race, besides relieving the three Provincial Governments from "a troublesome excrescence"

After due consideration and exchange of views the Government of India in a Despatch to the Home Government

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proposed the partition of Bengal for creating a new province, wherein it was recommended to transfer Sambalpur along with the tributary States of Bamra, Kalahandi, Patna, Rairakhol and Sonepur from the Central Provinces to the Orissa Division. The Resolution No.2491 dated 19 July 1905 said :

> Linguistic considerations are the main reasons for this transfer, which it is confidently believed will be beneficial to the interest of the people.

The above mentioned areas came under the administration of Bengal with effect from 16 October 1905 which marked the successful culmination of a popular movement to safeguard Oriya culture and language.

Madhusudan's unabated struggle to amalgamate the Oriya-speaking tracts of Sambalpur region and the crowning success provided great impetus to similar movements in Ganjam area under the Madras Presidency.

Language Agitation in Ganjam

In 1896, the Linguistic survey conducted by G.A. Grierson had revealed that, "Oriya is the language of north of the Madras district of Ganjam, with its connected Native States and of the Jeypore Agency of Vizagapatam". The native States were Atagada and Khillikote, Kattingia, Palur, Biridi, Humma, Dharakote, Bogoda, Shergada, Chenna and Pedda Kimedies, Chikiti, Surangi, Jarada, Jalantra, Budarsingi, Mandasa, Jarla and Parlakimedi. The above region had formed a part of Madras Presidency since 1766 when the British occupied Northern Circars. During the rule of the Imperial Gangas and Suryavamsi Gajapatis this area had formed a vital part of their empire. A large number of Oriya inscriptions dated in 14th and 15th centuries are found in the temples of Simhachalam, Mukhalingam and Srikurmum. The area constituted a nucleus region of the Oriya country serving as the cradle land of Oriya culture. But after the British occupation a growing influence of the Telugu-speaking people was gradually felt in the Court. Telugu language was introduced in the schools and in the courts. That Northern Circars was originally an Oriya country

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has been admitted by James Grant, A.R. Symmonds, John Beams and A. Stirling. In 1774 in the Ganjam district alone there were 1,000,000 Oriya-speaking people constituting 2/3 of the entire population. The census figures recorded in 1881, 1891 and 1901 show that the Oriyas were more in number than the Telugu-speaking people. In 1881 the Oriya constituted 50% of the total population. In 1891 they constituted 53% and in 1901, 75%.

In social relationship, caste, customs and traditions they had no affinity with the South. In matters of food, clothings, habits, religious rituals they were akin to the people of Orissa Division. The temples built in the area were typical Orissan temples in their architectural style. As a bilingual area consisting of both, the Oriya and Telugu population Ganjam posed a great problem for the administrative authorities. They were prone to believe that the inclusion of Ganjam as the Northern most district of Madras was a historical error. The historical connection between Ganjam and Orissa and the linguistic and cultural affinity often impelled the Oriya population of the district to pine for an union with the main stock of the race living in the Orissa Division.

The dominating position of the Telugus in the Courts, their preponderance in the schools and Government offices held the Oriya interests, Oriya language and culture in jeopardy. Oriya was never taught in the schools where the teachers were either Telugus or Tamilians. The Oriya boys had no inducement to join the schools since they were to learn everything through Telugu medium: as a result, the loaves and fishes of Government employment were denied to them. Though the Madras Government in their G.O. No.2024 dated 15 December 1890 desired that half the number of employees in Ganjam should be Oriyas or Oriya-knowing persons, and officers without knowledge of Oriya would not be promoted, these orders were never obeyed. A malafide attempt to abolish Oriya from University examinations generated bitter resentment against the Telugu chauvinism in 1870. The **Utkal Dipika** published an account of the unkind treatment meted out to the Oriyas in Ghumsur soliciting Government intervention in the matter. An Oriya movement was launched at Russelconda,

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the head-quarters of Ghumsur Taluq, where the people in a public meeting resolved to memorialise the Government to protect Oriya language against what they termed as 'Telugu expansionism'. The Oriya Press strongly criticised the clandestine move of some Telugu officials to write all depositions and judicial proceedings in Telugu script.

The Oriya movement in Ganjam was patronised by Harihar Mardaraj Deo, the Raja of Khallikote. To organise the movement he invited Nilamoni Vidyaratna, the renowned editor of **Sambalpur Hitaisini** in 1902 who, started **Prajabandhu** a weekly newspaper from Rambha. Through this paper Nilamoni transmitted the spirit of Oriya nationalism and created a vigorous public opinion for the amalgamation of Ganjam and other adjacent Oriya-speaking tracts with Orissa. He persuaded Harihar to organise a national conference of the Oriya-speaking people to stimulate unity and solidarity among the dismembered tracts. Accordingly, in July 1902 Harihar held an informal meeting of the Oriya leaders like Madhusudan Das, Radhanath Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, A. Parasuram Patro and others at Rambha palace to discuss the distressful conditions of the Oriyas under Madras Presidency and the ways and means of holding a national conference at Berhampur with representatives from all Oriya-speaking tracts. The leaders appreciated the initiative of Harihar, and Nilamoni gave wide publicity to the proposed conference through the **Prajabandhu**.

The Conference which took place at Berhampur on 11 - 12 April 1903, under the Chairmanship of Shyam Sundar Rajguru. (He had graduated from Raj Mahendri College in 1892 and was appointed as the tutor of the Prince of Parlakimedi. He was the founder of 'Utkal Hitaisini Samaj' and 'Bhasa Vivardhini Samaj'; Chairman of Parlakimedi Municipality from 1894-1909. An avowed Champion of Oriya culture, he was the editor of the **Ganjam News** and had attended several annual sessions of National Congress) the first graduate of Parlakimedi, was a successful congregation of the Oriya elite, pulsating with a new spirit of national consciousness. There was so much enthusiasm and involvement among the Oriya delegates attending the Conference that when Madhusudan Das

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alighted from the train at Berhampur. his carriage was drawn physically by the mammoth crowd to the place of meeting. He gave an inspiring speech on the necessity of amalgamation. The assemblage was known as the 'Ganjam National Conference', it was indeed a milestone in the history of Oriya nationalism.

Since the amalgamation issue was uppermost in the minds of the Oriyas of Ganjam they memorialised the Viceroy to amalgamate Ganjam with Orissa as the best safeguard to their language and culture. Their dismemberment from the main stock was considered "like a limb separated from the body". They prayed for the union of all the Oriya-speaking areas under one Government and one University. Against the representation, the Telugus of Ganjam submitted a memorial to the Viceroy, to neutralise the effect of which the Oriyas submitted another rejoinder on 1 November 1903 under signature of 566 persons.

Taking note of the developments and the justification of the Oriya cause, the Government of India in the famous Risley Circular proposed an excision of Ganjam and other Oriya-speaking tracts from the Madras Presidency for union with the Orissa Division. Since the Telugus were opposed to the excision proposal, they made a vigorous move to mobilise public opinion against the scheme. The Telugu officers did not even hesitate to exercise official pressure to prevent excision. Under the Telugu influence the Indian National Congress at its Madras session resolved (1903) :

> That the Congress views with deep concern the present policy of the Government of India in breaking up territorial divisions which have been of long standing and deprecates the separation of the district of Ganjam and the Agency tract of Ganjam and Vizagpatam districts from the Madras Presidency.

Such persistent efforts of the Telugus received warm patronage from Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras. Ampthill was never in support of the separation of Ganjam area from his province. He was unhappy over the issue because Curzon did not consult him prior to formulating the scheme. Fortunately for him Curzon

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proceeded on long leave from April 1904 to January 1905 when the Government of India finalised the details of territorial regrouping. During the absence of Curzon, Ampthill officiated as the Viceroy, and under his behest the Government of India resolved (19 July 1905) :

> Reasons of administrative expedience arising out of the peculiar linguistic and racial conditions and the geographical conformation of Ganjam and the Agency tracts of Vizagpatam were opposed to the transfer of those areas from the Government of Madras.

The decision temporarily sealed the fate of the Oriya movement in Ganjam. But the Oriya-speaking people did not give in, they consistently maintained pressure upon the Government through memorials and delegations demanding employment of the Oriyas in the Government service, and accession of the Oriya tracts with Orissa. Thus, over the language issue the barometer of Oriya nationalism recorded steady rise of national consciousness; the hopes created by the successful agitation of Sambalpur did not appear bleak in spite of the failure in Ganjam. The Oriyas remained steadfast in their effort to realise the political objective of amalgamation which had a deeper cultural meaning, i.e. protection of Oriya language and culture.

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CHAPTER - IV

THE UTKAL UNION CONFERENCE AND THE PERIOD OF MODERATION

The first twenty years of the present century were dominated by the activities of Utkal Union Conference through which Madhusudan Das tried to implement his policy of moderation. In fact, the Conference served as an organisational base for formulating and popularising his political programme. He held moderate political views and the `Moderate Era` of Indian politics (1885-1920) more or less tallied with his own public life. The nascent Oriya nationalism could attain maturity through the Utkal Conference. During twenty years of existence this organisation closely identified itself with the hopes and aspirations of the Oriya-speaking people and sincerely strove to realise them. Madhusudan was its undisputed leader till 1920 when with the launching of the Gandhian movement of Non-cooperation, the period of Moderation came to an end and a new group of political leaders emerged in Orissa. After that Madhusudan lost his grip over Orissa politics.

In the last two decades of the 19th century, on account of lack of communication facilities very few Oriya delegates could attend the annual sessions of the Indian National Cogreess. Raja Baikuntha Nath De from Balasore was the first delegate from Orissa who attended the Calcutta session of the National Congress. During the first fifteen years (1885-1900) only 11 Oriya delegates are known to have attended the Congress sessions on six different occasions. This All-India organisation was probably unable to ventilate the grievances of small political units of people devoid of their own identity. It concerned itself more with all-India

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matters and could evince no interest in the affairs of the Oriyas. The Oriyas were treated as appendices of the Bengal contingents and the grievances of the vociferous Bengalis always took precedence over their problems. The proceedings of the National Congress were dominated by Bengali stalwarts like Surendranath Banerjee, Woomes Chandra Banerjee, Rasbehari Ghosh, Bhupendra Nath Basu, etc. and the Oriya delegates always remained mute spectators in the National congregation. No Oriya delegate ever spoke at the Congress session, not even when the Congress passed resolution against the excision of Ganjam from Madras, which the Risley Circular had proposed. It was, therefore, futile to hope that the problems of the Oriyas would be solved through the national forum.

The above realisation prompted the Oriya leaders to devise a provincial alternative which would stimulate public interest in common welfare. At the beginning of the current century Surendra Nath Banerjee of Bengal was planning for a separate organisation at the provincial level. Since the grievances of the Oriya-speaking people were not identical with those of the Bengalis, Madhusudan Das decided to start a regional forum for his country- men. The Ganjam National Conference was a mere experiment to launch a more vigorous, broad based organisation in Orissa. At the Conference, Madhusudan could realise that notwithstanding the political dismemberment, the Oriya race was pining for unity and pulsating with a new life; the scattered Oriya-speaking people would welcome the idea of forming a regional forum to tackle their own problems. Time was not ripe for plunging into the national mainstream of the Congress movement, so long as the regional maladies were not cured. Madhusudan was shocked when his Bengali friends stood against the recognition of Oriya language in the Calcutta University in 1902.

How it Started

On 25 October 1903 a public meeting was held at the Kanika palace at Cuttack where it was resolved to hold a general conference on 30-31 December (1903) and 1 January (1904). An

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Executive Committee was formed with the Raja of Kanika as the Chairman. The Executive Committee at its meeting on 15 November drew up an Agenda for the proposed Conference and requested the Raja of Bamanda, Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev, one of the most enlightened rulers of the time, a poet and reformer, to preside. The Committee also decided to arrange an exhibition on the occasion of the Conference. Another meeting of the Executive had to be convened on 25 November on account of the sudden death of Raja of Bamanda on 19 November and invited the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj, Sreeram Chandra Bhanj Deo, also an enlightened ruler famous for his progressive political and social views, to preside. A Sub-Committee of 3 members was set up to select and invite delegates from Sambalpur, Midnapore and Ganjam. Narendra Nath Choudhury of Cuttack allowed his premises at Idga Maidan to be utilised as the venue for the Conference. On 6 December the Executive met again to convey their gratitude to the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj for accepting the chairmanship and to draw up a list of high officials who would be specially invited to the Conference. A few members were requested to wait upon the Commissioner personally to accord him an exclusive invitation. For maintaining peace and discipline groups of student volunteers were selected. At its 4th meeting on 10 December the Executive approved a special type of rose-coloured turban for the delegates. Subsequently they drew up a tentative programme for entertainment, fixed up the items and prizes for the Exhibition, and arranged for the accommodation of visiting delegates. All draft resolutions, list of the proposers and seconders were drawn up at a meeting held on 20 December. The members made a heated discussion on the Risley proposals, but expressed their gratitude to the Government for proposing to amalgamate the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts under the administration of Bengal. At the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee, ten Joint Secretaries were elected permanently for the Utkal Union Conference and the Commissioner was formally requested to inaugurate the Exhibition on 1 January 1904. Then some problems cropped up. The Government in a circular asked

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all their officers not to attend the Conference, and this led to the resignation of some officials from membership.

Such decision of the Government was unexpected, because the organisers had made it quite clear that the Conference would be a non-political body. Madhusudan, therefore, as the Secretary of the Organising Committee had to move fast in appealing the Lieutenant Governor and the Viceroy to allow the Government officers to attend the Conference. He stated that the Conference was an attempt of the backward Oriya-speaking people to improve their lot and since most of them were low-paid Government employees, it would be unfair to deny them an opportunity to discuss measures for their welfare. He drew instances from Madras and Bombay to point out that those provincial Governments had extended liberal patronage for holding the Congress sessions and allowed Judges of the High Court and Secretaries to preside over non-political meetings. In his opinion, the Oriyas had not committed any such act of disloyalty which could force the Government to withdraw their trust. On this appeal of Madhusudan, Curzon asked the Lieutenant Governor to allow the subordinate officials in Orissa to participate in the Conference and the elaborate arrangements of the Reception Committee could be saved at the last moment. On 25 December the Commissioner informed the Lieutenant Governor's permission to officers to attend the Conference provided a written assurance was given that there would be no political discussion.

Thus, while welcoming all those domiciled in Orissa as members of the Utkal Union Conference, princes and the common men from all Oriya-speaking tracts, officials and non-officials irrespective of their social status, at the inaugural session it was made very clear that speakers to "please note that all discussions on political and religious subjects and criticisms of the actions of the Government and Government officials are strictly prohibited"

The Conference was inaugurated at 11 A.M. on 30 December, Wednesday, with about two thousand delegates and invitees present. They were welcomed by the Raja of Kanika, and Madhusudan read out the messages from Sir Asutosh Mukherjee and the Rajas

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of Hindol, Sonepur, Baud and Khandapada. Among other V.I.Ps present were K.G. Gupta, the Commissioner; Editor of the Amrit Bazar Patrika; Raja B.N. De; Principal, Ravenshaw College and 30 Ruling Chiefs and Princes of the tributary States of Orissa, besides 300 delegates from Ganjam, 10 from Midnapore, and 25 from Sambalpur.

In his impassioned Presidential Address Sreeram Chandra Bhanj Deo, made the objectives of the Utkal Union Conference clear. After a brief discussion of the glorious historical past and the rich cultural heritage of Orissa, he dwelt upon the conditions then prevailing and emphatically spoke on the necessity of union among the Oriya-speaking people as well as on their educational, economic, industrial and social development. The Utkal Union Conference would pass and execute resolutions in their welfare, he said and there would be no political or religious disputes in the Conference because he pointed out, that political discussions should be preceded by political education. He congratulated the people of Sambalpur for their victory on the language issue and the people of Ganjam for starting the Ganjam National Conference. As an enlightened ruler himself, he spoke on the efficacy of industrial development in Orissa and spread of general, technical and female education because education was the basis for all forms of social growth.

The inaugural session of the Utkal Union Conference created a stir among the members, they became imbued with new ideas and a new vision. A series of Resolutions were passed - (i) thanking the Governor General for proposing to amalgamate the Oriya-speaking tracts under one administration, and (ii) thanking the Government for restoring Oriya language in the Courts of Sambalpur, and for increasing good neighbourliness with the adjacent provinces. The Conference instituted permanent Committees for social reforms, and improving Oriya literature. It expressed keen desire to develop indigenous industries for which annual exhibitions were to be planned to provide necessary incentive. Since industrial development was dependent upon technical know-how and expertise, the Conference resolved to send meritorious Oriya students for

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technical education either outside Orissa or abroad. For this purpose a special Committee was set up with the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj as Chairman. The Committee was affiliated to the Calcutta Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education and sponsored Oriya candidates for studying Engineering and the science of Agriculture. Under this scheme brilliant Oriya-students like, Sarangdhar Das, Birajmohan Senapati and Laxminarayan Sahu were sent for higher technical education abroad.

In the inaugural session it was further resolved to develop trade and commerce with greater emphasis on export, for economic prosperity. Some members expressed their ardent desire to improve Oriya language and literature. They wanted that the Oriya language should have adequate vocabulary for farmers, artisans and traders. The Oriyas were called upon to take the advantage of English education, because that would facilitate social reforms and economic well-being. An appeal was finally made to the Oriya Chiefs and Zamindars, farmers, officials, villagers and the scribes to propagate the message of the Utkal Union Conference and to evolve a sense of unity and racial pride among them.

During 1903 to 1920 the Utkal Union Conference held sixteen annual sessions and one special session. The details are as follows :

No. & Date of Session	Venue	President
First 30-31 December, 1903 1st January, 1904	Cuttack	Sreeram Chandra Bhanj Deo, Maharaja of Mayurbhanj
Second 28 December, 1904	Cuttack	Man Mohan Singh, Raja of Dharakote.
Third 13-14 April, 1905	Balasore	Kishore Chandra Singh Deo, Raja of Talcher.
Fourth 26-27 December, 1906	Berhampur	Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo, Raja of Kanika.

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Fifth 18-19 April, 1908	Puri	Harichandra Jagadev, Raja of Surangi.
Sixth 29-30 December, 1908	Cuttack	Radhanath Verma, Raja of Athagarh.
Seventh 30-31 December, 1910	Cuttack	Raja Baikunth Nath De of Balasore.
Eighth 6-7 April, 1912	Berhampur	Harichandra Jagadev, Raja of Surangi.
Ninth 28-29 December, 1913	Puri	Madhusudan Das.
Tenth 26 December, 1914	Parlakimedi	Vikram Dev Verma, Raja of Jeypore.
Eleventh 27-28 December, 1915	Sambalpur	Laxmi Narayan Singh Deo, Raja of Kera.
Twelfth 29-30 December, 1916	Balasore	Srinivas Rajmoni Rajdev, Raja of Manjusa.
Thirteenth 30-31 March, 1917	Cuttack	Fakir Mohan Senapati.
Special 21-22 September, 1917	Cuttack	Madhusudan Das
Fourteenth 19-20 April, 1919	Cutack	Gopabandhu Das
Fifteenth December 1920	Puri	Chandra Sekhar Behera
Sixteenth 30-31 December, 1920	Chakradharpur	Jagabandhu Singh

A close study of these sessions reveal some interesting facts. That the Rajas and Zamindars were the accredited leaders of the Oriya society is borne by the fact that they presided over ten annual sessions held during the period under review. That is

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indicative of the close co-operation which could be forged between the Oriya tributary States and the British-administered Orissa. No doubt, Madhusudan served as the link between the Princely States and the coastal districts, and was the moving spirit behind the Utkal Union Conference and its activities. At the same time it can seen that Madhusudan's inspiring leadership helped a new leadership to emerge around 1920.

Constitution

In the early years of existence the Utkal Union Conference operated on the basis of healthy conventions which served as the unwritten laws for the organisation. As long as Madhusudan's directives were acceptable to willing members there was probably no necessity of having a written constitution. Towards 1919 with the growth of an opposition to the leadership of Das, a written constitution was introduced. It listed the aims of the Organisation thus :

i) To establish unity and bring uniform progress of 'Natural Orissa;'

ii) To discuss any law and circular meant for 'Natural Orissa';

iii) To place before the authorities problems and grievances pertaining to 'Natural Orissa' or any particular region;

iv) To improve Oriya literature.

For achieving these goals it was stipulated in the Constitution that:

i) Each district shall have a Committee to be named as District Conference Committee;

ii) Membership of the District Conference Committee shall be opened to the natives of the district;

iii) These members shall subscribe Rupees 3/- each annually;

iv) District Committee shall establish local Committees at various suitable places in the district to propagate and execute the aims of the Utkal Union Conference;

v) The District Committee shall supervise the work

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of the Local/Branch Committee and shall ventilate the grievances of the district before the authorities;
vi) Delegate for annual sessions shall be chosen by the District Committee from their respective district. The following quota was fixed for each District Committee regarding the number of delegates to be sent to the annual Conference : Angul - 1, Balasore - 8, Cuttack -15, Central Provinces - 3, Ganjam - 10, Garjat States - 10, Midnapore - 1, Puri - 10, Singhbhum - 2, Sambalpur - 5, Vizagpatam - 3, Total - 68.
vii) Delegates from the District Committee and members of the Reception Committee alone shall be regarded as delegates of the Conference.

Further, an Executive Council of the Utkal Union Conference was to be constituted to execute the resolutions passed by the general body, to convene ordinary or extra-ordinary sessions of the Conference as and when it felt its necessity and to determine the venue.

Resolutions and Achievements

Within a short period of existence the Utkal Union Conference emerged as the avowed champion of the amalgamation movement. In all the annual sessions the members passed resolutions impressing upon the Government to bring together, 'Natural Orissa' (wherever Oriya language was spoken and the Oriyas formed majority in the population) under one administration. In 1903 and 1904 they expressed profound gratitude to Lord Curzon for the Risley Scheme. To commemorate his memory the people of Ganjam even proposed to set-up endowments, to give financial aid to meritorious students. The third annual session in 1906 desired expeditious amalgamation of Ganjam and other Oriya-speaking tracts under the Madras Presidency with Orissa. The way Lord Ampthill sabotaged the aspirations of the Oriyas created a deep stir in the Ganjam region; new Oriya leaders like Harihar Panda of Aska took up the issue with renewed vigour. Madhusudan

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arranged an executive meeting of the Utkal Union Conference at Rambha palace during 29 April and 1 May 1905, to steer a popular discontent against the Government. The Committee realised the futility of seeking justice from Ampthill and devised ways and means to spread education among the Oriyas under Madras. Since Ampthill's decision had caused deep injury in the minds of the Oriyas of Ganjam area, the fourth annual session of the Utkal Union Conference was organised at Berhampur in December 1906, where the attitude of Madras Government was publicly condemned. Harihar Mardaraj Deo, the Raja of Khallikote, raised a permanent fund to finance the propagation of Oriya movement in Ganjam. Under his patronage some Oriya schools were established. The Raja of Bada Khemedi and Narasingh Das took great pains to spread the Oriya movement against strong Telugu opposition. Raja of Bada Khemedi became the Chairman and Narasingh Das, Secretary of the organising committee. The publication of **Ganjam Odia Hitavadini**, a periodical from Berhampur immensely helped the Oriya cause. Its editor Chintamoni Mohanty was a person of great talent, who apart from highlighting the grievances of the Oriya-speaking people, instilled in them an indomitable national spirit and love for the mother tongue. Chintamoni Mohanty, who came from Bhadrak, was a prolific writer himself. In fact Harihar, Chintamoni, Nilamoni Vidyaratna and his brother Damodar Kaviratna were apostles of Oriya nationalism in the South, and as the agents of the Utkal Union Conference, rendered great service in protecting the Oriya language and culture against Telugu domination.

The Utkal Union Conference held the 8th and 10th annual sessions at Berhampur and Parlakimedi respectively, in 1912 and 1914, with a view to keep up the flame of Oriya nationalism ablaze in a most sensitive area whose amalgamation with Orissa was a question of life and death for the Oriyas. In these sessions the amalgamation issue dominated the proceedings. The high hopes raised by the creation of the new province of Bihar and Orissa in 1912, were dashed to the ground when the visiting Governor of Madras, Lord Pentland, made a statement at Berhampur

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in December 1913 that there was no possibility of changing the status quo and the question of Ganjam's excision from Madras was not to be reopened. This provoked the Utkal Union Conference which at its Parlakimedi session resolved that the Government should constitute the Oriya-speaking areas in Vizagapatam Agency and Jeypore estate into a separate Oriya district.

A close analysis of the numerous resolutions passed by the Conference gives the impression that the members were fully involved with the idea of uniting the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts. The next important issue before them was the spread of education- general, technical, and female. The Presidential addresses and the proceedings of the Conference more often than not highlighted these issues. They demanded more funds for the spread of education in Orissa, a separate University, extension of agricultural and industrial training, the establishment of an Engineering School, greater facilities in the Ravenshaw College, and the opening of M.A. and B.L. classes. Since Orissa was primarily a country of farmers, the Conference often discussed the necessity of educating them with the modern methods of agriculture and the technique of breeding improved varieties of livestock. Appreciating that, T.E. Ravenshaw, the former Commissioner, donated a sum of Rupees one thousand to be spent on promoting the cause of education among poor Oriya boys and Madhusudan took initiative to start a Girl's High School at Cuttack under the care and supervision of his adopted daughter Sailabala Das after his return from England in 1908. The Conference in fact wanted a Girl's High School to be set up in each district.

At the Puri session in 1913, Madhusudan, as the President, pioneered a resolution appreciating the laudable efforts of Gopabandhu Das and his devoted band of associates, viz., Harihar Das, Nilakantha Das, Godavaris Mishra, Lingaraj Mishra and Krupasindhu Mishra, to revive the traditional education of India in the pattern of Gurukula, at Satyabadi. The Satyabadi school was set up in 1909 by Gopabandhu Das in pursuance of the Congress ideology of National education, where the students were inculcated with a sense of discipline and dedicated service. Though the Government

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considered this school as a breeding ground for disloyal citizens and an explosive institution, the Utkal Union Conference unanimously commended the efforts. Elaborating the aims of the Conference, Madhusudan in his Presidential address stated - "Education should not produce Deputy Collectors, Magistrates and Clerks only, it should make men, ardent patriots and true nationalists."

The Conference was aware of the disadvantages of not having Oriya-schools in Singbhum, Midnapore, Phuljhar, Padampur, Chandrapur, Chakradharpur and other outlying Oriya-speaking tracts and appealed the Government to take special measures to establish Oriya primary schools in those areas. (Parlakimedi Session, 1914). This concern was warmly reciprocated by the Oriyas living in the above areas and they evinced profound interest in the success of the Conference. That a sense of unity and commonness of purpose prevailed among the Oriya-speaking people in the outlying tracts under Bengal, Madras and Central Provinces was vindicated when the Raja of Kera of Singbhum, presided over the 11th annual session at Sambalpur in 1915 and Chakradharpur was chosen as the venue of the 16th annual session in 1920. The Utkal Union Conference did not abide by any political barrier and traversing the artificial barricades created by the provincial boundaries strove to unite the Oriyas on a common platform.

The Conference was equally concerned with the economic progress of the Oriya-speaking people. It wanted encouragement of local crafts, like weaving and filigree, development of trade and commerce, revival of the salt manufacturing industry, proper exploitation of natural resources, improving the productive capacity of the soil through irrigation and scientific manuring, renovations of the ports on the sea coast to facilitate export trade, revival of indigenous industries and use of indigenous articles. The leaders had rightly felt that agriculture alone would not make Orissa prosperous; her economy should grow from industry, trade and commerce to obviate the vagaries of monsoon. Salt manufacture and weaving were ancient industries which sustained thousands of families. The British economic policy had destroyed these

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sources of income for the Oriyas among whom the spirit of entrepreneurship gradually died out. Madhusudan and his associates, therefore, wanted the revival of indigenous industries, exploitation of mines and raw materials which were plentiful in Orissa. They appealed for reviving the sea-borne-trade through better port facilities as that was one of the major considerations while creating the new province of Bihar and Orissa in 1912. A Joint Stock Company which had started a Tanning Factory at Cuttack was profoundly thanked by the Conference. (1916)

In 1917 under the editorship of Madhusudan the Conference started a weekly paper **The Oriya**, to publicise its programme and activities. In this venture Madhusudan was ably assisted by Braja Sundar Das, his faithful disciple and long time associate in public life. Madhusudan's desire to train up the Oriya youth in political affairs took shape through the Utkal Young Men's Association which was affiliated to the Conference as a Junior branch. The meetings of the Utkal Young Men's Association were arranged simultaneously during the annual sessions of the Utkal Union Conference, where the members of the former often worked as volunteers and listened to the discourses of the leading public men of the time. A time came when Madhusudan gave more importance to the Younger branch because he felt that on them the future of the Oriya movement would ultimately rest.

Another significant work of the Utkal Union Conference was to organise an industrial cum agricultural exhibition during the annual sessions. These exhibitions had profound educative value and attracted visitors in large number. Under Madhusudan's directive, handloom for weaving, rice hauler, machines for tanning raw hides and numerous other industrial and agricultural products were exhibited at the Exhibitions to attract the people towards mechanised industries. He was confident that the Oriyas were talented artisans and a creative people; they merely lacked entrepreneurship on account of the policies of the Government. Up to 1913 Orissa had no representation in the Governor General's Council, making it difficult for the Oriyas to ventilate their grievances before the Supreme Government. The Conference claimed the

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presence of an Oriya member there and succeeded in the attempt. Madhusudan Das and the Raja of Kanika were successively members in the Council from 1913 to 1920. Another pertinent issue to which the Conference drew public attention was the necessity of a railway line joining Khurda with Sambalpur. (Parlakimedi Session, 1914 and Sambalpur Session, 1915). This railway project was essential for the improvement of land communication between coastal and Western Orissa and would have facilitated trade and better social contact.

Madhusudan's last tangible achievement as the leader of the Utkal Union Conference was in stimulating public interest on the issue of provincial autonomy and presentation of a memorial before the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Committee in Calcutta on 11 December 1917. In order to discuss the proposals of constitutional reforms Madhusudan organised a special session of the Conference at Cuttack on 21-22 September 1917 with himself as the Chairman. Again on 19 October there was another mammoth public meeting. In both these meetings Madhusudan explained the nature of the forthcoming constitutional reforms and suggested that for the distribution of provincial territories on the basis of linguistic homogeneity a representation to be sent to the Viceroy, as well as the Secretary of State. The representation was to outline the history of the Oriya movement, emphasise upon the special grievances of the Oriya-speaking people, and on the basis of Grierson's linguistic survey should specify the Oriya-speaking tracts to be constituted into an united Orissa Province. Further, he wanted a representation to be submitted to Montague by a delegation of the Utkal Union Conference.

Simultaneously, public meetings were held at Berhampur where the Raja of Parlakimedi presided and Madhusudan's special emissary, the Raja of Kanika explained the scope and nature of the reforms and the proposals of the Utkal Union Conference. Under a heavy downpour of rains the assemblage at Berhampur expressed strong views

> Orissa and Oriyas have all to establish their claims as a race or a nation quite as distinct and marked

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> as other Indian races and nations xxx. The Oriyas are not preposterously sanguine, but all they wish is that their cry may atleast reach the Olympian ears.

The memorial with which the delegation of Utkal Union Conference consisting of Madhusudan Das, Raja of Kanika, Braja Sundar Das, Gopabandhu Das, Sudam Charan Naik and Harihar Panda waited upon Montague in Calcutta was a "piece of very arduous work". It contained four appendices Appendix - A, was a Map showing the distribution of Oriya-speaking tracts based upon the survey of G.A. Grierson; Appendix - B, contained arguments for the creation of an Oriya province; Appendix - C, contained a list of the Oriya-speaking tracts proposed to be united together into a province; and Appendix - D, was the extract of relevant portions from the famous Risley Circular of 1903. The delegation claimed that they need a separate administration of the type of Bihar and Orissa, failing which the united Orissa be placed under the Government of Bihar and Orissa, so that in future it would conveniently develop into a separate administration. If the second alternative would be accepted, the Delegation sought equal status for the Oriyas with the Biharis, equal representation in the Legislature and the University. They made it quite clear that they were prepared to accept amalgamation as a prelude to the creation of a separate province. Madhusudan explained how the proposed reforms of Montague-Chelmsford Scheme would be meaningless for the Oriya-speaking people so long as they had no political identity of their own.

The political stand adopted by Madhusudan was typical of a 'Moderate' of his time. His policy of moderation was amply rewarded when Montague taking a sympathetic view of the Oriya problem felt convinced with the arguments of the Oriya delegation. He was not happy over the constitution of the province of Bihar and Orissa in 1912 where the partnership of two separate races with distinct language and culture, was uncongenial for healthy political growth. He therefore favoured the creation of homogeneous units through a regrouping of territories. The Mont-Ford Report by suggesting the formation of Orissa into a Sub-Province adequately

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justified the policy of moderation which Madhusudan and the Utkal Union Conference had been pursuing since long. This was a major concession granted to the Oriyas and a creditable achievement for the Conference.

Change in Perspective

In 1917 the Utkal Union Conference appeared to have reached a culminating point. Thereafter the policy of moderation came under sharp criticism and a younger group of nationalists emerged in the political arena who could not relish the leadership of Madhusudan any more. In fact, resentment against Madhusudan was slowly in the offing. As early as 1917, Gokulananda Choudhury, an ardent supporter of Utkal Union movement and a leading advocate of Cuttack secretly voiced the feeling that Madhusudan was using the Conference as his personal property. But he did not have the guts to challenge Madhusudan's leadership openly. It was Gopal Chandra Praharaj, the famous Oriya lexicographer, who in the periodical **Utkal Sahitya** published a critical account of the state of affairs. While praising Madhusudan for his generous financial help to sustain the Conference, he did not hesitate to remark that the organisation was "On His Majesty's Serviceed only. In 1908 an anonymous letter from Puri appeared in the **Odia O Navasamvad**, (Weekly, published from Balasore) under the caption "A friend of Utkal" The letter read as follows

> The most remarkable feature of the Utkal Union Conference is that it is altogether dissociated from politics and its scope is limited to social and industrial question xxx. The Conference is just like a thanks-giving body to various officers of the Government xxx. The business before the Conference is a serious one which cannot be done by mendicant policy. All Provincial Conferences, while working independently should at the same time subordinate their own interests to the interests of the great Indian National Congress - which is the centre, the foster mother of all public movements in India. We are almost sure that Mr.

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> Das (Founder of the Conference) did not take this view. The Utkal Union Conference of which he is the soul has so long been indifferent to the Congress.

Though the letter expressed hidden ire against Madhusudan yet probably there was some truth in the above criticism. That the Utkal Union Conference was professedly a non-political organisation cannot be denied. That at its annual sessions more often than not, it passed resolutions thanking Lord Curzon, or the Government and other authorities, cannot be denied either. It was unnecessarily apologetic in tone in consonance with the prevailing practice in the Indian National Congress which also till 1905 merely 'appealed', 'prayed' or 'most humbly submitted' for 'merciful', 'justice' and 'sympathy' of the British Government. Like the Congress leaders the Oriya leaders were also avowed moderates who believed in the efficacy of depending upon the grace of authorities for gaining political objectives. Madhusudan was the leader of the Moderate group in Orissa.

At the Surat session of the Indian National Congress in 1907 division became perceptible in the Congress leadership. The confrontation between the Moderates and the Tilak group cast its shadow upon all political circles in the country. In Orissa the echo was also felt and the anonymous letter referred to above was also an expression of new attitudes and new ideas held by a new group of politically-minded persons in Orissa who differed from the Moderates. The emerging group of young nationalists at Satyabadi represented a new political force in Orissa who nourished views different from Madhusudan. This group was conspicuous by its absence at the Balasore session of the Utkal Union Conference in 1916. The politics in Orissa was considered to be a 'one man show' and the Press criticised Madhusudan for deliberately keeping away from the Bankipur session of the National Congress in 1912. All criticism against Madhusudan were projected through the **Odia O Navasamvad.** In September 1917 the paper alleged that Madhusudan was against the Home Rule Movement, whereas the Puri group led by Gopabandhu Das favoured Orissa's wholehearted participation in that movement.

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Under the caption 'Cuttack Chandi Conclave', (Madhusudan's residence was located in the Cuttack Chandi area of Cuttack) and the 'Policy of Exclusion', the paper expressed bitterness at Madhusudan's 'autocratic handling' of affairs. Against mounting criticism Madhusudan resigned from the editorship of **The Oriya** in January 1919, and during 1918 no annual session of the Conference could be organised.

At the 14th session of the Utkal Union Conference at Cuttack in April 1919, Gopabandhu Das in his Presidential address expressed disapproval of the "Stereo-typed agitation" of the Moderates and suggested joining the main-stream of Indian politics. He was most unsparing in his criticism against the performance of the Conference during the earlier fifteen years which he considered to be 'extremely poor' He could not appreciate that Oriya nationalism should remain confined to certain regional barriers and maintained that it should merge with the national movement. In his opinion, the hopes and aspirations of the Oriya-speaking people should be merged with the All-India movement, because they were Indians first and Oriyas next.

Gopabandhu's speech was a trend setter in Orissa politics. His remakrs prompted the editor of **Odia O Navasamvad** to write; "The Utkal Union Conference is hunted by its blundering conscience. It has bogged itself by keeping away from the high level canal of Indian politics". The Puri session of the Conference in December 1919 caused further set back to the cause of 'Moderation'. Chandrasekhar Behera's presidential speech highlighted the Congress activities and idealism. He stated that the Conference had ceased to be non-political after the last special session at Cuttack which exclusively discussed the question of reforms. It was high time for the Oriyas to join the National Congress, he said. His call to eschew moderation and to join Gandhian movement appeared irresistible. The Utkal Union Conference reached a critical stage with rift between Madhusudan and Gopabandhu becoming unbridgeable. A last bid was made to save the provincial organisation by selecting Chakradharpur as the venue of the next annual session to be presided over by Madhusudan Das. The moderates

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and the ultra-nationalists made a thorough preparation for the final showdown. But Madhusudan was a practical man; notwithstanding the strong support of Braja Sundar Das and Biswanath Kar he withdrew his consent to preside over the Chakradharpur session at the last hour. He was neither willing to reconcile with the political ideas of the younger generation whom he had baptised into politics nor was he prepared for a trial of strength. When the Raja of Kanika declined to preside, the Reception Committee nominated Jagabandhu Singh, a close associate of Gopabandhu as the substitute of Madhusudan. Gopabandhu and a large group of young, enthusiastic Oriya Congressmen on their way home from the historic Nagpur session, where the famous Non-cooperation programme of Gandhi was launched, came to Chakradharpur to attend the Utkal Union Conference. They were an inspired lot, surging forward with new zeal and vigour. They surcharged the Chakradharpur session with the new wave of non-cooperation with Gopabandhu Das as their apostle. Brajasundar and Biswanath tried in vain to arrest the new political trend. Even, they found it difficult to read a message from Madhusudan under the drowning noise of 'Shame', 'Shame' from the Congressites. On the second day, a resolution for joining the Congress movement was discussed. Chandra Sekhar Behera and Gopabandhu Das spoke passionately in favour of joining the Indian National Congress. They felt that Utkal Union Conference as a provincial organisation would be unable to deliver the goods; the Oriyas should, therefore, join the bandwagon of the Congress movement. Jagabandhu, as President put the resolution to vote and announced that 127 were in favour with 16 against. In the ecstasy of emotion the Conference got submerged in the Gandhian movement of 'Non-cooperation' and lost its identity. From that particular moment the 'Moderates' and the 'Non-cooperationists' came to parting of the ways; the former silently fought for the amalgamation of the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts and the Non-cooperationists openly followed the historic programmes of Gandhiji.

After this political discomfiture Madhusudan withdrew himself for a while from all public activities. He did not have the age to

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join the mass movement. Probably on account of his own conviction he did not have the urge either. Not by non-cooperation with the Government, but through the grace of The Raj, he believed it to be easier to achieve the political goals the Oriyas sought for. Therefore, on account of his long and eventful public life when in 1921 the Government appointed him as the Minister of Local Self Government in the province of Bihar and Orissa, he accepted the assignment (22 April, 1921). For the Government he was the rightful choice; but the Congressites in Orissa cast serious aspersions against him for having accepted a high-salaried post under the British Raj. The entire country was then ringing with cries of non-cooperation. Hundreds of leaflets were circulated against Madhusudan which said that the huge salary of the Minister of Local Self Government would be paid out of the revenue raised from "malaria-infested Balasore", "filaria infested Puri" and "flood affected Cuttack districts". He was condemned in public meetings and processions by his own people for whom only a short while ago he was the friend, philosopher and guide.

Madhusudan's sincere efforts during the earlier twenty years to impart political training to his countrymen did not go in vain. Through consistent training in the provincial arena of the Utkal Union Conference, the Oriyas attained political maturity. That they chose to differ from their mentor was immaterial; the most significant fact was that a nation came of age, its resurgence was complete. Madhusudan had no grudge if the younger generation in Orissa preferred to follow a different path for realising their goals. Only future events would justify whether his policy of 'Moderation' was the correct path or not. It was so. The substantial work that Madhusudan did through Utkal Union Conference bore fruit in 1936, when a separate province of Orissa was formed - the first ever province in India to be organized on linguistic basis. One may surmise, if Madhusudan's leadership would have continued and he would have given a free hand, probably a separate province of Orissa, with all Oriya-speaking tracts together, would have been formed much earlier, during his life-time. But a new vision was dominant - a Pan-Indian vision and it was not so much

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the younger generation as this new vision, that decided the new perspective. Madhusudan gracefully acquiesced in. But he stuck to his own reason and conviction. In fact the portions of Orissa that were left out in 1936, when Orissa province was formed, have never been united with Orissa afterwards. It is also another matter if after Independence demands were raised all over India for regional development and regrouping of provinces on linguistic basis, the two hall-marks that guided all Madhusudan's activities.

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CHAPTER - V

THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

With the advent of Gandhi the history of the nationalist movement in India took a new turn. The Non-co-operation and the Civil Disobedience movements in which millions of mute Indians participated with unprecedented enthusiasm took the struggle against British Raj to its highest peak. Orissa joined this struggle under Gopabandhu Das and Harekrushna Mahtab with complete dedication. The Salt campaign at Inchudi, a comparatively unknown village at the sea coast near Balasore, created history like Dandi on the west coast of India. The Moderates and the Congress members who adopted Gandhian programme formed two separate groups and following different paths, they strove to achieve their respective goals.

In the special session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta on 20 August 1920 Gandhi's proposal for adopting non-violent non-co-operation programme was first discussed. By this programme he meant not to cooperate with any Government Institution or enter the Councils and the Assembly, and called upon his countrymen to renounce all titles bestowed by the Government, and not to use foreign made clothes or liquor. From Orissa Gopabandhu Das and Jagabandhu Singh attended this session. This novel idea caught the imagination of the young nationalists of the country who felt that the policy of moderation had been given a fair trial without yielding desired results and the time was ripe for a mass movement under Gandhi's leadership. A group of students at Cuttack consisting of Harekrushna Mahtab, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Nityananda Qanungo and Bhagirathi

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Mohapatra formed a Reading-cum-Recreation club called 'Bharati Mandir' at Cuttack in early 1920. They held frequent discussions among them on the leading political issues of the time and felt attracted towards the Indian National Congress. At the Nagpur session where the Non-co-operation resolution was finally accepted, about twenty seven delegates from Orissa were present under the leadership of Gopabandhu Das. The Nagpur session took the historic decision to organise linguistic provinces for better party works, as a result of which Orissa which had no separate Congress-party unit so far was allowed to constitute the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee. It was for the first time that the idea of constituting provinces on the basis of linguistic homogeneity got the approval of the Congress party and Orissa became the first beneficiary.

The Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee was formed in March 1921, with Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mahapatra as the President and Secretary respectively. Besides these two, there were a Vice-President, a Joint Secretary and ten ordinary members in the Executive Committee. Ekram Rasool became the Vice-President, Brajabandhu Das, Joint Secretary, and the Members were, Jagabandhu Singh, Nilakantha Das, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Niranjan Patnaik, Harekrushna Mahtab, Dharanidhar Mishra, Nilakantha Das Choudhury, Atal Behari Acharya, Braja Mohan Panda, Jamini Kanta Biswas. At the District and Sub-Division levels also the Committees were formed for effective propaganda and organisational works.

Balasore District	Harekrushna Mahtab
Puri District	Jagabandhu Singh
Ganjam district	Niranjan Patnaik
Sambalpur district	Nilakantha Das
Cuttack district	Bhagirathi Mahapatra
Jajpur Sub-Division	Rajkrushna Bose
Kendrapada Sub-Division	Jadumoni Mangaraj

On 24 March Gandhi visited Orissa and held public meetings at Bhadrak, Cuttack, Puri and Berhampur to explain the meaning

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and objectives of the Non-co-operation movement. This had a profound impact on the young generation who resolved to practise the programme. Harekrushna Mahtab, Nityananda Qanungo, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Rajkrushna Bose left their educational institutions along with a large number of college-mates. Gopabandhu Choudhury, a brilliant Deputy Collector tendered resignation from a lucrative Government employment. Similarly Nilakantha Das, Lingaraj Mishra, Surendra Nath Das and Muhammad Hanif gave up lucrative assignments in response to the call of Gandhi. All of them subsequently outshone in the public life of Orissa as great leaders.

Gopabandhu Das was the apostle of the Non-co-operation movement in Orissa. By his personal example and qualities of leadership, through numerous public meetings held at Satyabadi, Puri, Cuttack, etc. and above all through the writings in the **Samaj** he made Non-co-operation the most popular creed. It spread like wild fire through the nooks and corners of Orissa. Students in large number joined the movement by renunciating Government schools. When their number became staggering the Congress leaders felt morally responsible to arrange for their proper education through National Schools. The Satyabadi School and the High School at Chakradharpur catered to such requirements by severing all links with the Government. For the students of Sambalpur Zilla School who joined the Non-cop-operation movement under Laxminarayan Mishra, Gopabandhu sent Nilakantha Das to set up a National School at Sambalpur. National schools were also set up at Jagatsingpur, Cuttack and Soro. In order to organise the educational system and conduct examinations in these schools. The Utkal Swarajya Siksha Parishad was constituted with Gopabandhu Das and Nandakishore Das as the President and Secretary respectively.

To prepare the nationalist volunteers for a sustained non-violent and peaceful movement the necessity for some training centres was felt. This led to the establishment of Ashrams at Jagatsingpur and Cuttack. Gopabandhu Choudhury took charge of the Alaka Ashram at Jagatsingpur and Swaraj Ashram at

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Cuttack was under the care of Bhagirathi Mahapatra. Harekrushna Mahtab set up the Swaraj Mandir at Balasore. In these centres the Congress workers were trained in publicity work, in operating 'charakha', in the establishment of Panchayats and National Schools at the village level, and in picketting before shops dealing with foreign-made clothes or liquor picketting etc. all of which became very popular measures of Non-co-operation at Bhadrak, Cuttack, Puri, Sambalpur and Berhampur. Inspired by the leadership of Gandhi and Gopabandhu, the Oriya labourers working in Calcutta refused to serve the cloth merchants who were selling foreign-made clothes. On 4 September 1921 they were addressed by Gopabandhu in a Calcutta meeting to continue their peaceful struggle.

The student Non-co-operators at Cuttack formed the Swaraj Sevak Sangha, a type of volunteer organisation to organise public meetings, enrol volunteers and to propagate the utility of charakha as against imported clothes. In the villages, Panchayats or Arbitration Courts were set up to decide minor criminal cases or civil disputes. These village arbitration courts evoked great public enthusiasm.

Harekrushna Mahtab took great pains to organize the Non-co-operation movement in Balasore with the help of Karunakar Panigrahi and Krushna Chandra Mahapatra. The patriotic speeches delivered by them in public meetings evoked great interest among the audience. On 5 April,1921, they arranged a 'hartal' before the Zilla School asking the students to boycott their classes for joining the nationalist movement. Mahtab's Swaraj Mandir served as a veritable training centre for the young nationalists, who spared no pains to collect money for the Tilak Swaraj Fund besides picketting before the cloth and liquor shops. To propagate the message of Gandhi they started **Swarajya Samachar** and induced people to read the **Samaj** and the **Amrit Bazar Patrika** for authentic news on the nationalist movement. In response to the call of Gandhi, Surendra Nath Das, a Sub-Inspector of Police resigned his service to join the Congress. He proved to be a great asset for Mahtab in organisational activities and was justifiably nicknamed as the 'Sardar'. Due to their combined efforts the village arbitration

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courts attained high reputation and popularity in the Balasore district. Even the Zamindars preferred to take their rent suits to these courts for quick and effective disposal. There were instances of labourers joining the Non-co-operation movement against rice-mill owners whose loyalty to the Government appeared irksome.

The history of non-co-operation movement in the Sambalpur district was equally inspiring. Among the student leaders who took active part in the movement were Krutartha Acharya, Nrusingha Guru, Bhabani Prasad Mishra and Jaganath Mishra. After boycotting their classes they held a public meeting at Budharaja and went on a procession through the town. Chandra Sekhar Behera and Laxminarayan Mishra were their mentors. From Sambalpur the movement spread to Bargarh and Jharsuguda. Even in remote areas like Bheden, Padampur and Kuchinda, Ghanashyam Panigrahi, Hazari Patel and Dasarathi Mishra respectively provided leadership to the rural folks. The visit of Gopabandhu Das on 18 June 1821 served as an impetus to the cause of the Non-co-operation movement in Sambalpur. Sambalpur had some veteran leaders like Dharanidhar Mishra and Chandra Sekhar Behera who were well-versed in political activities since the days of language agitation; they served as the most dependable props for Gopabandhu Das. Apart from them, Nilakantha Das as the Headmaster of the National School, rendered invaluable service to the cause of the Non-co-operation movement. At Jharsuguda and the neighbouring areas the Congress programme became immensely popular due to incessant efforts of Janardan Supakar, Gokul Chandra Pujari, Arun Das and Chandra Sekhar Panigrahi. Mahavir Singh, a contractor, allowed his residence to be used as the Congress Party office. Subsequently it served as a meeting place for all and sundry Congress workers who came to Jharsuguda or passed through it.

The zeal and enthusiasm exhibited by the Non-co-operators of Sambalpur attracted the attention of Chittaranjan Das, the renowned Swaraj leader of Bengal, who deputed Satish Chandra Dasgupta and Shyam Sundar Chakravarti to study the factors responsible for the widespread popularity of the movement. Apart

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from the National School of Nilakantha Das which made the movement popular in Sambalpur region the contributions of three weekly papers - the **Utkal Sevak**, the **Sadhana**, and the **Seva** in this regard was no less significant. In response to the movement, Purna Chandra Das, the Head master of Patnaikpara M.E. School, Pitambar Chandra Dey, an assistant teacher of Zilla School and G. Sachidananda Rao, a clerk, resigned their services from the Government to join the Congress movement. Mahendra Nath, an advocate similarly followed suit after giving up his profession as a lawyer in the District Court. By July 1921, a total number of 5934 members had been enrolled in the Congress Party, with a total contribution of Rs.2878/- made to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. The Khadi movement too was popular and about 7000 charakhas were operating throughout the region. In the whole Division, according to an official estimate there were 40,000 Congress members, with Rupees Rs.22,000/- contributed to the Tilak Swaraj Fund and 15,000 charakhas operating. This is indicative of the growing popularity of the National Congress as a political organisation and the upsurge among the mases.

In order to strengthen the organisational aspect of the National Congress in Orissa a new Provincial Working Committee was formed in November 1921, with the following office bearers : Gopabandhu Das - President; Jagabandhu Singh - Vice President; Lingaraj Mishra and Bhagirathi Mahapatra - Secretaries; and Harekrushna Mahtab, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Niranjan Patnaik, Nilakantha Das, Ekram Rasool and Brajamohan Panda as members. With these dedicated nationalists the Working Committee became quite formidable to provide stability and sound leadership to the provincial Congress. The Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1921 was attended by 127 delegates from Orissa and after the session they returned with renewed vigour and enthusiasm to work for the Gandhian programme.

While the Non-co-operation movement was gaining momentum in the urban and rural areas alike, the rate of public meetings, incidents, picketting, boycott, hartals and processions increased beyond expectation and the Press began to foment

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popular unrest, the Government could not remain unconcerned about it. Excepting the **Samaj** and **Utkal Sevak** other papers maintained unusual calm and moderation. They were considered to be 'extremist' papers. There was a total boycott of the Council elections throughout the country and on 17 November the day the Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on a visit, normal life in the cities and towns remained paralysed due to a general hartal. Probably enough was enough, and with no stomach to tolerate further agitation the Government decided to adopt very stern measures. The Rainy Circular (G. Rainy, I.C.S. was the Chief Secretary of the Government of Bihar and Orissa) of the Government of Bihar and Orissa stated categorically

> Government view the movement with utter disapproval, as tending to lawlessness and ultimately to anarchy and that they will not hesitate to employ all lawful and reasonable means to combat it.

True to their words, the Government under the provisions of the Press Act cancelled all the securities of those papers which had either published objectionable articles or tried to incite the public through seditious writings. To curb the agitation they decided to select the leaders in each district to be put behind the bars. For delivering seditious speeches in public meetings the offenders would be prosecuted under Section 124-A or 153-A of the Indian Penal Code and preventive action should be taken under Section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code. They had no hesitation to take the help of Defence of India rules.

Apart from the above, the British Government in a bid to control the non-co-operators through the Indian agencies suggested upon a vigorous counter propaganda. Every officer in the administration was to regard himself a missionary to restrain misguided people from plunging into a rebellious course. The Ministers, the Members of the Legislative Council, and the Zamindars were called upon to play their role in this regard. Justifying such measure the Circular said, "more propaganda we have, less repression will be necessary" Every Government officer should explain the beneficial aspects of the reforms introduced

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by the India Act 1919. They were to warn the leaders about the disastrous consequences of the agitation, remind the propertied-class that they would suffer in case of growing political anarchy in the country.

The Government's expectation that the Non-co-operation movement would not last long did not come true. When the movement instead of showing signs of wearing out began to gain momentum, the Government resorted to drastic measures. Rajkrushna Bose, Jadumoni Mangaraj, Govind Mishra, Bansidhar Mishra and Banchhanidhi Mohapatra were warned by the Police. Subsequently Bose was arrested and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Babaji Ramdas, Govind Mishra and Satyabadi Nanda were also taken to custody. Under various charges of sedition, defamation, preventive security and picketting etc. a large number of arrests were made in Puri, Cuttack, Khurda and Sambalpur. Nisakar Mishra, Maulavi Hussain and eight other political prisoners were sentenced with long term imprisonment. Under the provisions of Press Act the Mishra Press in Sambalpur was fined Rs.25/- for printing a patriotic song which pronounced "Swaraj is inevitable". The owner of the Press was Dharanidhar Mishra. Nilakantha Das had composed the poem "Swaraj Bhaya Albat Hoga" - (Oh, brothers, Swaraj is inevitable). In a public meeting such measures of the Government were condemned.

Along with repressive actions the Government took recourse to counter propaganda through persons and Press that were loyal to the Raj. On 8 May Shankar Prasad Mishra (Member, Legislative Council, Bihar and Orissa, from Sambalpur) addressed a public meeting at Rampella to dissuade people from joining the Congress Party. Such meetings were organised at Atabira, Bijepur, Dhama and Sasan, without of course having any impact on the people. Madhukar Sai, the Zamindar of Rajpur was another supporter of Government who opposed the Congress movement. The Congress workers at Sambalpur had to face an uphill task in neutralising the counter propaganda of the loyalists. Nilakantha Das, Gajraj Das, Gangadhar Dora and G. Sachidananda Rao did creditable work to maintain the popularity of the Non-cooperation movement.

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The visit of Nazrul Haw, the founder of the Sadaquat Ashram and Gopabandhu Das to Sambalpur in June, not only restored the tempo of the movement, but also helped to intensify it. In response to the call for a total hartal on 17 November 1921, the National School remained closed, a public procession moved through the streets and a mammoth meeting was held at Gandhi Ghat. The sweepers, the hawkers and the shop-keepers willingly joined the public meeting to condemn the rigours of British administration. The Government remained equally stubborn. They imposed prohibitory orders upon Dharanidhar Mishra, Ganes Prasad Padhi, Bhagirathi Mishra, Laxminarayan Mishra and Mahavir Singh, disallowing them to hold public meetings. Mahavir was placed under arrest on 14 December and Laxminarayan Mishra sentenced to short term imprisonment in March 1922. Such actions provoked public resentment and the Non-cooperation movement received further fillip. The District Congress Committee, despite the prohibitory order of 144 decided to hold mass meetings at Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Bargarh in January 1922. From 6 April to 13 April 1922, they observed the National Week with fast, hartal and prayer. On the final day of observance there was a complete hartal with the town exhibiting a desolate look. In October 1922, the visit of Rajkrushna Bose and Gopabandhu Choudhury and their inspiring speeches added to the high morale of the people of Sambalpur. They spoke on the efficacy of the Khadi movement, the drive against illiteracy and consumption of liquor. A new District Congress Committee was formed with Chandra Sekhar Behera as the President. His leadership had far reaching effect in furthering the cause of Congress movement through an uplift of the Harijans and revival of the Tie and Die (A technique by which the weavers made beautiful designs on clothes, a very popular and flourishing concern in Sambalpur and Bolangir districts) textile industry. Sambalpur was most conducive to the growth of Khadi Industries in the villages where large number of people belonging to the weaver's caste (Bhulia, Kosta, Harijan and Kuli) lived. The Provincial Congress Committee liberally extended financial help to Mahavir Singh, Nrusingha Guru and Krutartha Acharya to start Khadi centres at Jharsuguda, Sasan and Bargarh respectively.

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The Kanika Rising

During the Non-cooperation movement Kanika, a permanently settled Zamindari in the Cuttack district attracted much public attention. Its king, Raja Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo was a renowned figure in Orissa for his long association with the Utkal Union Conference and also as a member of the Imperial Council. The people in his estate were unfortunately subjected to severe taxes and a policy of extortion. An oppressed peasantry drew the attention of the Congress leaders seeking relief against heavy burden of taxes. When the matter was brought to the notice of the Raja by Atal Behari Acharya, the Secretary of the District Congress Committee, Cuttack, the former asked for specific instances of oppression for taking prompt remedial measures. He also evinced great interest in the Charakha programme as a method to provide employment to his flood-affected people, and also in the village Panchayat system to let the people settle their differences amicably.

In early 1922 the situation in Kanika began to deteriorate on account of the Raja's order enhancing the land revenue which the people considered too burdensome. While resenting against the enhanced rate of taxes they lodged complaint before the Government seeking justice. But nothing was done to redress their grievances, because the Raja made the Government feel that the refusal of his tenants to pay taxes was an extension of the Non-cooperation movement and should be dealt with as such. A political colour was given to the peasant movement of Kanika. When the Commissioner, Orissa Division, came for a spot inquiry there was a large multitude of peasants eager to convey their problems: but a police action for security of the Commissioner resulted in the death of two persons and injury to many. The incident was followed by large scale arrests and repressive measures against the tenants. The Government in a bid to localise the unrest prohibited the entry of Congress leaders like Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mohapatra to Kanika. For violating the prohibitory order these two leaders were subsequently arrested. Their arrest sparked off scathing criticism in the floor of the Legislative

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Council of Bihar and Orissa where on 25 August 1922 Bhagabat Prasad Mahapatra, an Oriya member moved the following resolution

> This Council recommends to the Government to appoint a Committee with non-official majority to inquire into the last Kanika troubles.

In an impassioned speech the Honourable Member tried to drive home the truth that the Kanika uprising was due to serious agrarian unrest prevailing among the tenants of the Raja, and due to latter's policy of extortion. As such the Raja should be persuaded by the Government to adopt suitable ameliorative measures. The way the Government dealt with the situation as a law and order problem was unfortunate. The Government remained stubborn; and in defence of the Raja did not agree to conduct any inquiry. Poor peasants had to nourish their wound. A bid of Mahtab and Niranjan Patnaik to enter into Kanika incognito for assessing the situation correctly was foiled by a vigilant police in June 1922. Kanika was silenced by coercive methods.

End of Non-cooperation

Shortly thereafter almost all the leaders of Orissa were hauled up by police and sentenced to imprisonment. The Non-cooperation movement was suspended after the sad incident of Chauri Chaura in June 1922. A Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee visited Orissa in August to find out the possibility of again starting the movement. Since their finding was in the negative nothing was done to renew the struggle. Orissa appeared leaderless. There was a slackening of enthusiasm in the rank and file of the Congress Party. In February 1923 Nilakantha Das and Godavarish Mishra formed the 'Swarajya Party' evincing an interest to seek election for various local bodies and the Council. This was strongly opposed by Mahtab, and the Orissa Congress appeared to be a divided house which weakened the organisation further. In September 1923 at its Delhi session, the National Congress decided to seek election to the Council. Therefore, in the ensuing Municipal elections of October, both the Congress

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and Swarajya Party vied with each other to capture the Municipalities and the Councils. From Orissa Nilakantha Das and Bhubanananda Das got elected to the Central Legislature and Godavarish Mishra, Jagabandhu Singh, Radhanarayan Das and Bhagabat Mahapatra to the Provincial Legislature. The Local Boards in Orissa were captured by the Swarajists, most of whom were young and inexperienced. In their enthusiasm they used their offices for political propaganda; Swarajya flags were hoisted on the Municipal buildings and public money was liberally spent to popularise Khadi and Swadeshi goods. They made an attempt to make spinning a part of the regular curriculum in the primary schools which evoked much displeasure in the official circle. The Swarajists also fought in the Legislative Council for the release of all political prisoners and had an exciting debate over two days.

With the release of Gopabandhu Das from the Jail the Provincial Congress Party organised its first session at Cuttack on 28 and 29 June 1924, under the chairmanship of Prafulla Chandra Ray, a renowned Bengali scientist. In this conference Madhusudan Das accepted the Congress creed and became a member of the Party. He was then having regular correspondence with Gandhi. This conversion was inevitable because Madhusudan for long could not have remained aloof from the political activities of his country. His entry into the Congress marked another significant change in Orissa, i.e. the revival of the Utkal Union Conference. Sashibhusan Rath, the editor of **Asha**, a member of the Madras Legislative Council from Ganjam, and an avowed champion of the Union movement was solely responsible for reviving the Utkal Union Conference in March 1923 at Berhampur. He could do this by striking a compromise between the old 'Moderates' and the new 'Swarajists' through a clever stratagem. He adopted certain Congress programmes like the National education, Khadi, Swadeshi, village Panchayats etc. as the new principles of the Utkal Union Conference whose basic objectives however remained unchanged. The revival of the Conference had a salutary effect upon the Oriya-speaking people living in Madras. There was an immediate explosion of the Oriya movement demanding

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amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts with Orissa. The Oriya members in the Madras Legislative Council raised the issue by moving resolution to that effect.

At the inaugural session of the Provincial Congress a Women's branch called the Utkal Women's Conference was formed under the initiative of Sarala Devi. This formed another milestone in the history of freedom movement in Orissa by mobilising the conservative Oriya women to the fore-front of nationalist struggle.

In 1926, over the question of seeking election to the Legislature there was serious rift among the nationalists as several rival groups emerged in the political arena. From Orissa, Mahtab, Nandkishore Das, Narayan Birabara Samanta, Lingaraj Mishra and Godavarish Mishra got elected to the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa. They assailed the Government for the apathy with which the problems of Orissa were viewed. Pioneering this attack in the Council, Mahtab said- "In spite of repeated floods and increasing miseries, that Orissa is facing today, Government do not care to think of that part of the province although assurances have been given from the highest to the lowest in charge of administration that Government are very anxiously considering the solution of the problems of Orissa". Mahtab did not stop there. He insisted upon the formation of a committee of officials and non-officials to inquire into the causes of floods which devastated the country in July-August 1927, the magnitude of loss and the relief measures undertaken by the Government. Gopabandhu Das also in a public meeting strongly criticised and publicly condemned the indifferent attitude of the Government.

The sudden demise of Gopabandhu Das in June 1928 caused a great set back to the nationalist movement in Orissa. There was a scramble for leadership among the young members like Mahtab, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Nilakantha Das, Rajkrushna Bose, Bhubanananda Das and Biswanath Das etc. The old feud between the moderates and the ultra-nationalists again came to the fore-front over the Congress decision to boycott the Royal Statutory Commission (More popularly known as the Simon

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Commission, after its Chairman Sir John Simon). It was the desire of the moderates to co-operate with the Commission for obtaining a favourable recommendation for a separate Orissa province. For them, the Simon Commission alone was competent to grant the long cherished political demand and the opportunity was not likely to come again. Madhusudan Das's moderate disciples, viz, the Raja of Kanika (then he was the Finance Member in the Executive Council of the Governor of Bihar and Orissa), Braja Sundar Das, and Laxmidhar Mohanty, therefore decided to co-operate with the Commission and arranged a warm reception for the members at the Patna Railway Station. As against this, the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held at Puri on 19 August resolved :

> (a) This Committee denounces all clandestine attempts of interested persons to give an appearance to the outside world that the Oriyas are out to co-operate with the Simon Commission and expresses its clear and emphatic opinion that no such efforts in the name of the Oriyas are ever genuine, and
> (b) in view of the fact that all the truly representative organisations of the country are unanimous as to the boycott of the Commission, this Committee calls upon the people of Utkal to do all in their power to effectively demonstrate their attitude of boycott towards the Commission.

This decision of the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee was in pursuance with the resolution taken by the Indian National Congress to boycott the Simon Commission, which was probably a wrong stand when the specific interest of Orissa is taken into consideration. As the subsequent events proved, the Provincial Congress adopted an anti-Orissa attitude. The Oriya-speaking people did not support the Congress for this The Moderates' co-operation with the Simon Commission ultimately yielded fruitful results.

There was nothing very significant in the nationalist movement during 1929. The Congress organisation took to routine works like

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propagating the cause of Khadi and exposing the evils of untouchability. At frequent intervals some conferences were organised to keep up the image of the Provincial Congress Committee. At the district and sub-division levels the local Committees continued functioning half-heartedly. The year 1929 appeared more like a lull before the storm; a storm was imminent in the form of a more vigorous popular upsurge in India.

The Civil Disobedience Movement

While the Simon Commission was preparing the constitutional frame work for India, the Nehru Committee was working upon a similar project for the country (under Motilal Nehru). All political parties had made it quite clear that if the constitutional structure suggested by Nehru would not be accepted by the Government in toto by 31 December 1929, the campaign of non-violent non co-operation would be revived in full force for the attainment of complete independence. The spurt of terroristic activities involving Bhagat Singh and Jatin Das which swept through the country was indicative of the future shape of events. With the coming of Labour Party into power in 1929 under Ramsay Macdonald an assurance of 'Dominion Status' was given to India, but the exact date when 'Dominion Status' would be granted was not stated by the Viceroy which led to grave doubts and disappointment in the Indian political circle. The Congress naturally developed a feeling of having been driven to the wall and nothing except a powerful mass movement was considered inevitable. At the Lahore Session in December 1929 Gandhi, therefore, resolved to fight for complete independence through a vigorous mass movement. The path for the Civil Disobedience movement was thus laid bare.

The call of Gandhi was irresistible. He drafted a Declaration of Independence calling upon the people not to submit before the Raj which had caused utter ruination to the country. On 26 January the Independence of India would be celebrated throughout. In towns and villages the message of complete Independence would be read out to millions asking them to pledge their support

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to the movement. An unprecedented wave of enthusiasm swept through the country ushering a new phase of India's struggle for freedom, known as the Civil Disobedience movement.

Orissa was caught in the fresh wave of nationalist fervour. But besides mass meetings, processions, hoisting of national flags and resigning of the seats in the Legislative Council (Godavaris Mishra, Lingaraj Mishra, Nandkishore Das and Narayan Birabara Samanta resigned from the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa. Biswanath Das resigned from Madras Legislative Council and Nilakantha Das from the Legislative Assembly, India) the Congress leaders in Orissa had to participate in a Salt campaign to defy the existing Salt laws as a measure of the Civil Disobedience movement.

Salt manufacture was an ancient industry in the coastal tracts of Orissa. It sustained several thousand families for centuries till the monopoly policy of the British deprived them from earning a livelihood. Salt being an essential item of domestic requirement was found to be a profitable source of income for the British monopolists. The Government was importing huge quantities of salt from Liverpool for India at the cost of a flourishing indigenous industry. The Oriya press often tried to bring home these facts impressing upon the Colonial Government the necessity of reviving the ancient industry for the economic upliftment of the people. The Utkal Union Conference had also reiterated the resolution for revival of salt trade and repeal of the salt tax.(Balasore Session, 1916). It was pointed out that salt was a staple food in Orissa consumed with rice. Whenever there was a crop failure due to flood or drought, or interval during two crops, the people of the coastal districts engaged themselves in manufacturing salt to earn their bread. It was the only means of livelihood in some areas adjacent to the Chilka Lake. Those who had small areas of salt lands found themselves in a helpless state after the Government laws prohibited manufacturing of salt. Thus the policies of the Government inflicted untold miseries upon a sizeable section of the Oriya community, compelling them to migrate to distant towns and cities for survival. To prevent such migrations the Government

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in 1927 granted permission for free manufacture of salt in the coastal tracts for a short period. This temporary concession instead of mitigating the grievances of the people whetted their desire for a permanent remedy, and the withdrawal of the concession made them more conscious of the injustices and exploitation to which they had been subjected.

Considering the above factors, the Utkal Union Conference never spared the Government's stubborn attitude regarding the salt policy and repeatedly insisted upon a revival of the Industry. In 1918 Gopabandhu Das had raised the question of revival in the floor of the Legislative Council. On the basis of authentic statistics he made out a convincing case to suggest that the Government had no justification in abandoning the salt industry in Orissa. In 1929, in the Legislative Assembly of India, Nilakantha Das, the Congress member from Orissa, emphatically pleaded for reviving the industry. He would not agree on the Government's plea that shortage of fuel was an impediment against the revival. The policy of salt taxation also came under his sharp criticism. He condemned the measure of taxation as oppressive which bled white the poorest section of the population.

Popular resentment against the salt taxation policy was first expressed through an organised public meeting held at Cuttack under the auspices of the Orissa Association in 1888, where in his presidential address Madhusudan Das drew a revealing comparison between the tax incidence in England and in our country. He stated that while the per capita income in England was Rupees 300/- the total taxes an Englishman paid was Rupees 8/-, whereas in India against an annual per capita income of Rupees 20/-, the total taxes of a tax payer came to Rupees 16/-. He could appreciate a rise in the price of rice, but not of salt, and felt it revolting because the tax on salt went out of India to the coffers of the British traders and the Government. This mammoth public meeting was a testimony to the boiling anger of the people and the depth of Madhusudan's political wisdom.

Thus, when Gandhi was contemplating to launch the Civil Disobedience movement by violating the Salt law, Orissa was

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simmering with discontent against the exploitive nature of the British salt policies and was ripe for an explosion. In fact, during Gandhi's visit to Orissa in December 1927, the prospect of a salt movement had been discussed with him by Harekrushna Mahtab. Gandhi was convinced how the British salt policy destroyed Orissa's coastal industry, causing untold miseries and hardships on the people. He found Orissa a congenial place for launching the mass civil disobedience movement under the local Congress leaders and gave his blessings to Mahtab.

Mahtab selected Inchudi, an unknown village on the sea coast, at a short distance from Balasore, as the most suitable place to launch the Salt campaign. On 15 March 1930, a special session of the Provincial Congress Committee was convened at Balasore to discuss the course of the struggle. The Committee approved Inchudi to be Dandi (Gandhi himself broke the Salt laws at Dandi on the West coast in Gujarat, and signaled off the launching of the Civil Disobedience movement on 6 April 1930) of Orissa for the proposed Salt Satyagraha and entrusted upon Mahtab the responsibility to make necessary arrangements for the purpose. Mahtab was then the General Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee of which Gopabandhu Choudhury was the President. The Committee resolved to proceed with its Satyagraha notwithstanding whether other provincial units were prepared to launch the campaign or not.

Mahtab selected Surendra Nath Das as his chief associate to train and mobilise volunteers at Balasore. At Cuttack also a centre was opened to enrol and mobilise volunteers for the campaign. Under the leadership of Gopabandhu Choudhury, a batch of twenty-one volunteers were selected to proceed from Cuttack to Inchudi by road. Large number of enthusiastic volunteers poured into Cuttack and Balasore for enrolment. The first batch of Satyagrahis from Cuttack was scheduled to leave for Inchudi on 6 April. On the previous day in a crowded public meeting the Congress leaders explained the nature and significance of the proposed struggle emphasising upon the principle of non-violence. Anticipating severe Government reprisal to bring the movement

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under control they wanted the struggle to be peaceful and non-violent. On 6 April, the day Gopabandhu Choudhury and Acharya Harihar Das began their march, the entire city of Cuttack showed great enthusiasm in felicitating and giving them a hearty send-off. The people blew conches, showered flowers and shed tears of joy. For the Satyagrahis it was a sacred pilgrimage, a historic fight against the mighty Imperial Government. Throughout their journey they received warm welcome and joyous greetings of the villagers living enroute.

On 8 April, Gopabandhu Choudhury and Atal Behari Acharya were taken to police custody for violating section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code whereupon the leadership of the marching column devolved upon Acharya Harihar.(Acharya Harihar was an associate of Gopabandhu Das and a leading member of the Satyabadi group of scholar-politicians). The news of above arrest spread through Cuttack like wild fire causing great commotion. It led to strikes, picketting, more arrests and convictions. However, Acharya Harihar reached Inchudi on 13 April. Already there was a congregation of thousands of men, women and children who came from far and near to witness the historic event of violation of the obnoxious salt laws. The police too was present to dissuade the nationalists from violating the laws. Having failed in their bid, the police took resort to coercion and applied physical force to snatch away the salt earth which the satyagrahis had collected from the sea shore. But no amount of police atrocities could deter the satyagrahis from their sacred mission, they silently bore the sufferings and tortures during the following two days. On 15 April, Acharya Harihar and six other leaders were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment. But these arrests failed to dampen the spirit of the people. Waves after waves of volunteers arrived at Inchudi from Cuttack, Balasore, Baripada, Ganjam and Sambalpur to continue the struggle unabated. Inchudi presented an inspiring spectacle of prolonged conflict between the colonial forces of oppression and the ardent nationalists bent upon breaking the shackles of foreign rule. Inchudi was too vast an area to be brought under control by the limited police force. They could

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neither prevent thousands of Satyagrahis manufacturing salt nor check the equal number of carriers who took away the contraband article for sale in the local markets. People exhibited utter disregard to laws or police brutalities while carrying salt from Inchudi beach to the market places in enthusiastic processions. The women folks vied with one another to purchase this salt in exchange of costly ornaments.

The salt campaign at Inchudi involved people as never before in any nationalist struggle. It drew together men, women and students of all categories and descriptions. There was no dearth of volunteers despite mass arrest and torture. Increasing mass involvement in the nationalist struggle was also noticed in the form of growing appetite for political news. Finding it difficult to cater to public demand, the **Samaj** became a daily paper from 6 April. Mahtab published the **Prajatantra** as a daily paper from Balasore. These papers faithfully recorded the heroic tales of Inchudi in letters of gold. Inchudi had another significant contribution to the history of nationalist movement in Orissa. The women of Orissa under the leadership of Rama Devi, Malati Devi, Sarala Devi and many others joined the volunteers' camp and bravely faced the police, defying salt laws. At Kujang, Queen Bhagyabati of Paradip joined the salt campaign with about five hundred women volunteers. They dumped foreign salt in the ponds and persuaded people to use home made salt. Bhagyabati became a source of inspiration and moral strength for the women Satyagrahis. Kujang in the Cuttack district attained same fame like Inchudi at Balasore. Salt campaign did not remain confined to above two places. Saratha, Eram, Padampur, Kasaba, Basta and Bhadrak in the Balasore district were few other places where the tempo of the movement reached the highest watermark. Almost the entire sea coast of Balasore was agog with brisk activities of the Satyagrahis. Mahtab, Karunakar Panigrahi, Govind Mishra, Rajkrushna Bose, Nandkishore Das, Pranakrushna Padhiary were arrested and sentenced to either short or long term imprisonment. This spate of arrests had no impact on the rising tide of the movement.

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Nilakantha Das led the Satyagraha movement in Puri district. Astarang, Marichpur, Kakatpur, Khandasahi, Madanki and areas around the Chilka lake, where in early times salt was being manufactured in large quantity, became centres of great political excitement in 1930. The Sub-Divisional Officer, Puri, shifted his headquarters temporarily to Kakatpur for summary trial of the Satyagrahis arrested for violating the salt laws. The people remained listless and unconcerned in spite of his persuasive and coercive methods to foil the agitation. On the other hand, under provocation the Satyagrahis showed unflagging zeal and enthusiasm in breaking the salt laws. The coastal district of Ganjam under the Madras Presidency was another focal point of the salt campaign. Biswanath Das, Dibakar Patnaik, Niranjan Patnaik provided inspiring leadership to large number of volunteers to join the movement. The Government at first watched their activities with unusual apathy and unconcern. But when the Satyagrahis proposed to attack the salt factory at Huma a large number of them were taken into Police custody. Even from interior Koraput Radhakrushna Biswasroy came to participate in the movement. The district of Sambalpur did not keep itself aloof from the Civil Disobedience movement. A committee under the leadership of Ghanashyam Panigrahi was set up at Sambalpur town to send volunteers to Inchudi in batches.

Apart from the salt campaign, the movement of 1930 had many other manifestations. Malati Choudhury in a public meeting at Cuttack set fire to a heap of foreign-made clothes. She organised protest meetings against the arrest of Gandhi on 7 May. At Puri, Balasore and Berhampur similar protest meetings were held. Picketting, before shops dealing with foreign goods was normal feature of the agitation. Under the leadership of Janakinath Bose the lawyers of Cuttack promised not to use mill made clothes and began using Khadi. Baikunthanath Mohanty, an employee of the Government resigned his job in protest against the repressive measures of the Government. The most harrowing experience of the Government's policy of reprisal was kept in store for the innocent villagers of Srijang, who in their enthusiasm to violate the salt laws launched an agitation against the Choukidari tax.

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Unfortunately, due to lack of sound leadership they were not properly organised. The village was attacked by the police, ruthlessly pillaged to the ground, and men and women were subjected to indiscriminate brutalities. Stricken by terror the villagers fled away to the jungles for safety, leaving behind whatever material belongings they had. Srijang presented a desolate look, bearing the cruel marks of a colonial Government.

The Gandhi-Irwin pact of March 1931 brought the Civil Disobedience movement to an abrupt end. It led to the release of all political prisoners arrested and sentenced to various terms in the prison during the salt campaign. They were accorded unusual receptions; trains carrying these patriots were frequently stopped by enthusiastic crowd enoute, mammoth public processions took them to the venue of public meetings where garlands were literally showered amidst scenes of profound rejoicings. Everywhere in Orissa's towns and villages the Satyagrahis were warmly treated as warriors returning home after the successful completion of a holy war. The salt campaign proved to be the highest watermark of Orissa's political and social awakening. Under the magic spell of Gandhi's leadership social barriers like caste and religion were relegated to the background. The people exhibited an unprecedented unity and commonness of purpose. A new trend in Oriya literature was also noticed. To rouse popular emotion and the intense fervour of nationalism Mahtab, Kuntala Kumari Sabat and Nityananda Mahapatra composed inspiring poems which the Government had to proscribe. The women and the students rendered creditable service in the nationalist movement by giving it both depth and dimension. Their participation ensured early success in the struggle for freedom. The student-community boycotted their institutions and examinations, worked as the messengers of the Gandhian programmes in the interior villages, and by complete involvement in the national cause ensured continuity of leadership.

Soon after Gandhi-Irwin pact there appeared a slackening of Congress activities in Orissa. Attention of the politically minded persons got diverted to an issue of profound importance - the creation of a separate Orissa Province. The Simon Commission

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in 1928 had set up a Sub-Committee under C.R. Attlee to examine the problem of the Oriya-speaking people relating to the justification of a separate province. Undaunted by criticism of the Provincial Congress organistion, the Moderate Oriya leaders - Braja Sundar Das, B.N. Mishra and Laxmidhar Mohanty etc. pleaded before the Sub-Committee for a separate province by uniting the Oriya-speaking tracts on the basis of linguistic homogenity. Attlee being convinced of the justification recommended the creation of a separate Orissa province. Thereupon the Simon Commission made similar recommendation to the Home Government. Consequently, the Government of India announced the appointment of a Boundary Commission under the Chairmanship of S.P.O'Donnell to work out the boundary of the proposed province. This necessitated mobilisation of public opinion in the Oriya-speaking tracts under Madras, Bengal, the Central Provinces and Bihar in favour of amalgamation with the Orissa Division, so that the long cherished dream of the people would be realised. The situation brought together the leaders of Orissa on a common platform on 2 May 1931 when an All Parties' Conference was convened at Cuttack under the Chairmanship of Acharya Harihar Das. A number of Committees were formed there to collect documents in support of the cause, funds for publicity work and arranging public meetings in the outlying areas. This unity was successfully maintained through periodic conference of the leaders. In spite of his illness and old age Madhusudan actively associated himself with the leaders' conferences. On 12 February 1933 addressing the leaders at the Sreeram Chandra Hall at Cuttack he wished them all success in their noble endeavour.

The Government's White Paper proposing the creation of a new Orissa province was announced on 18 March 1933.

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CHAPTER - VI

MADHUSUDAN DAS LEADER

Madhusudan Das possessed a multi-dimensional personality. During his long tenure as a Legislator in the Lieutenant Governor's Council in Bengal, and in the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa (1896 to 1923) and as a member of the Imperial Council (1913-16) he played a very significant role in projecting the problems of Orissa and asking for redress. Not only as a lawyer and as a champion of the underdogs - the peasants, but as a journalist, humanist and industrialist, he tried to serve the cause of his countrymen faithfully with a resolute will. A staunch nationalist, he always placed the country above the self. By example and percepts, by conviction and efforts he showed to his countrymen the ideal role of a patriot. He had earned a lot, spent a lot, died as a pauper; but before going to eternal sleep he saw his dream come true; Orissa became a separate political entity. He was undoubtedly the maker of modern Orissa.

The Legislator

Madhusudan Das had a long and glorious innings as a successful legislator in the Provincial as well as Imperial Legislatures. On 14 March 1896 he joined as a member of the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal having been elected from the District Boards and Municipalities constituency of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. He served his constituency creditably during 1896-97, 1900-02 and 1908-11, till the separate province of Bihar and Orissa was created. With the creation of the new province, Das served as a member of the new Legislature (joined on 20 January

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1913) for more than a decade and concurrently enjoyed the membership of the Imperial Council (joined on 27 January 1913) during 1913-16. Under the Reform Scheme of 1919 he was appointed as the Minister of Local Self Government of Bihar and Orissa in 1921, but resigned from the prestigious post two years after (8 March 1923). That put to an end to his distinguished career as a Legislator-administrator. For his wit and wisdom, unsparing criticism and deep sense of involvement, he was highly respected by his colleagues who nicknamed him as 'Cato'. His speeches and deliberations in the floor of the Legislatures not only reveal his profound erudition and command over the subject but also his concern for the welfare of the people in general.

Soon after taking the oath of the office as a member of the Lieutenant Governor's Council in Bengal, Madhusudan espoused the cause of Orissa. He argued that while appointing Munsifs for Orissa the Government should take into consideration the superior claims of candidates who had obtained their B.L. degrees from the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and knew Oriya. He assailed the Government for transferring the Salt Department of Orissa to Madras which had resulted in closing down the local manufacturing industry and the consequent loss of means of livelihood for several thousands of men. A news item published in the **Utkal Dipika,** brought to light the harassing and illegal proceedings of the Officers engaged to prevent illicit manufacture of salt in Orissa. Madhusudan pressed upon the Government to take early remedial measures to stop the evil. Taking part in the discussion on Bengal Financial Statement for 1896-97, he insisted that Orissa was the most suitable place for the establishment of an Agriculture College. Since the population of Orissa was mostly agriculturists, students for the college would be conveniently drawn from the agricultural class. Further, the temporary settlement of Orissa added extra weight to his arguments. Since the Government was more keen to improve the conditions of agriculture in Orissa they should provide better scientific knowledge through an Agriculture College. Next year, during the budget discussion Madhusudan again pleaded for promoting agricultural education. He said

> I maintain that in a year of famine any outlay for

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> the promotion of agriculture would not be out of place. Prevention is better than cure, and therefore, by educating the people in the art of agriculture, though we shall not be able to avert famines by commanding rainfalls in proper season, it will enable the people to know what crops they can grow in a season when the rainfall is scanty. (Proceedings of the Council of the Lt. Governor of Bengal, 1897, pp.199)

Madhusudan was in favour of imparting agricultural training to the students of the Primary Schools by introducing Agriculture Primers. Each school should have a small farm of its own where the boys could make their experiments upon what they read about agriculture. Since majority of the pupils came from cultivating class and became cultivators themselves afterwards, the suggestion of Madhusudan appeared quite convincing.

The system of primary education was considered as impractical and unsound by Madhusudan. He wanted it to improve the conditions of the artisans and agricultural classes. "To attain this aim the hand and the head must be trained together" he said. In a voice ringing with despair he criticised the prevailing system of education as 'subversive' and 'deplorable' because it produced "disappointed and discontented aspirants" for the post of Muharrirs, Gumasthas and petition writers. He felt that the education in the school should supplement the education derived at home, so that the ancestral education is not forgotten, nor the parental vocation abandoned. The school should train the head and the home should train the hands of the children. An improvement of the economic condition of the country would be possible only if the educational system creates love for ancestral crafts and not aversion. Explaining this point further, Madhusudan stated

> The temples of Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark testify to the capabilities of the people prior to the days of British rule xxxx. These monuments of past glory serve only the purpose of weeping willows under which the present generation might weep over their loss. The people of Orissa have a history worthy of

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> any people in India. They have a glorious future in their unexploited natural resources. But these treasures lie concealed in the dark cells of ignorance. Let the light of education shine in those dark places. (Proceddings, 1909, p.109)

As an avowed champion of higher education for the Oriya students, Madhusudan was visibly perturbed at the unsatisfactory results of the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, on which the Commissioner of the Orissa Division reported (At the B.A. examination held in 1894, 29 candidates appeared, of whom only 7 passed. At the F.A. examination only 5 passed, out of 31. There was also a decrease in students' strength - from 68 in 1894 to 59 in 1895).

> there appears to be something wrong with the institution to account for such poor results. If the evil admits of a remedy, I would strongly advocate that the remedy should be sought for and applied. The college is the only institution of the kind in Orissa, which as a Division, is admittedly backward in higher education." (Annual Administration Report on the Orissa Division, 1894-95)

Madhusudan not only asked the Government to find out the real cause behind the miserable performance of the students of Ravenshaw College for prompt remedy, but himself investigated upon the problem. He found out that during 1892-95 the largest number of students failed in English, a subject taught by Mr. Hallward, the Principal. Hallward as the symbol of inefficiency became the main target of his criticism. Over the distribution of Rupees 10 lakhs of Imperial grant on education for Bengal, Madhusudan claimed a lion's share for Orissa due to her education backwardness. He drew the attention of the Government to the problem of accommodation in the Ravenshaw College, and for its lecture rooms and teacher's common room. A separate hostel for the Muslim students was enlisted in the demand. He moved the Government for granting further affiliation in History, Physics and Botany, appointment of lecturers, special grants for library, water supply, laboratory requirements and play ground. The Cuttack

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College, in his opinion, was a prestigious institution where princes and children of affluent families were being educated providing a perennial flow to the growing elite class of Orissa. Since private donations were ungrudgingly given by progressive minded persons of Orissa for the development of the college, the Government should not be niggardly in their attitude, was the comment offered by Madhusudan. He was keen to raise a sum of Rupees 20,000/- towards the initial cost of an Engineering School for Orissa. The necessity of female education was equally projected by him. He had sent his adopted daughter on his own expense to England for higher education with a view to engage her in spreading female education in Orissa. The girls' school which she started at Cuttack, did yeomanly service in the cause of female education.

The savings which the Finance Member had announced under the head 'Medical School', Madhusudan would like it to be diverted for the Medical School and General Hospital for Cuttack where there was a short supply of surgical appliances. In his opinion :

> Any grant to a Medical School to which there is attached a hospital is not only a grant for the noble purpose of education, but it is combined to the still nobler purpose of giving relief to suffering humanity. (Proceedings, 1902-1903)

The issue of recruiting the Oriyas in Government service equally worried Madhusudan. He parried the Government with searching questions whether the several Departments gave sufficient notice by advertisements in the Orissa Gazette or local newspapers inviting candidates to avail the opportunity. He would like to know how many Oriyas were appointed in the Salt Department and what steps were taken to notify the vacancies to the people of Orissa.

Orissa was linked up with Calcutta and Madras by the East Coast Railways in 1899 which ushered a new era of better communication. But without feeder roads in the districts the people were not likely to enjoy the benefits of Railways. Madhusudan, therefore, demanded more funds for the District Boards to construct the feeder roads so that the cultivtors' access to better markets

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to earn good price for his produce would be easier.

On 27 July 1909 Madhusudan asked some revealing questions to the Government on the welfare of pilgrims to Puri. The Jagannath Temple at Puri annually drew large crowds from all over India during the occasion of car festival apart from a regular flow of pilgrims throughout the year. Congregation of the pilgrims often created problems of sanitation and health. Besides, the staggering problem of transport for millions posed great challenge for the Government. In course of their answers, the Government stated how cholera epidemic was of common occurrence among the pilgrims for whose transportation the Railways were unable to provide passenger bogies. Passengers were brought to Puri and taken back to destinations on goods wagons having no toilet facilities. The scarcity of water enoute was another challenging problem. Such revealation forced the Government to make adequate arrangements for the welfare of the pilgrims and much human tragedies could be averted.

Before the revocation of the partition of Bengal leading to the formation of the separate province of Bihar and Orissa in 1912, Madhusudan had to play a Herculean role in thwarting a legislation on 'Tenancy in Orissa' in the best interest of the Oriya tenants. The proposed Orissa Tenancy Bill, 1911, was an imposition of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 in an amended form which through the manipulation of Bengali Zamindars tried to perpetuate their control over Orissa peasantry. According to Madhusudan, the bill was unsuitable to the conditions and interests of Orissa. In a marathon debate he analysed the bill, clause by clause, to expose the anomalies and suggested that the bill should not be passed by the Bengal Legislature in a hurry; rather it should be left to the Legislature of the new province of Bihar and Orissa for a threadbare discussion. His arguments carried enough weight to urge upon the Governor General to withhold his assent and the bill was referred to the Bihar and Orissa Council.

As a member of the Lieutenant Governor's Council of Bihar and Orissa, Madhusudan was at first concerned with the general interests of the "baby province". He expressed the necessity of having a separate High Court for Bihar and Orissa, and the

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extension of the system of trial by Jury. From 1913 till 1923 as an experienced legislator and distinguished Minister of Local Self Government he gave an outstanding performance. Apart from projecting the specific problems of Orissa he participated in discussions on issues like, Amendment of the Press Act, the Benaras Hindu University Bill, Management of Railways, Amelioration of the Depressed Classes, Representation of Depressed Classes, Contamination of Ganges water, Franchise for women, Municipalities and District Boards, and Development of Mineral resources etc. Madhusudan creditably served as the Minister of Local Self Government, Bihar and Orissa from 6 January 1921 to 8 March 1923. During this period he piloted some important legislations on Health, Sanitation, Medical Care, structure and administration of local bodies, Primary education and treatment of Political prisoners. He was keen on extending the frontiers of the District Boards and Municipalities and redeeming these institutions from official control. The Bihar and Orissa Municipal Bill, the Bihar and Orissa Village Administration Bill, and the Bihar and Orissa Local Self Government Bill were some of his significant contributions. In these legislations he gave a shape to the concept of direct democracy by providing for recall which empowered the voters to withdraw an elected representative from the Municipal Council if he failed to fulfill the assurances given to his constituency at the time of election. The representation of the Depressed classes in the local bodies was another notable contribution of Madhusudan in keeping with the spirit of the time.

It was not very congenial for Madhusudan to continue for long under the British Government as a popular Minister. The system of Dyarchy introduced by the Montague-Chelmsford Reform was found to be unsuitable to his temperament. He felt sandwiched between the British bureaucracy and his countrymen. India was then pulsating with a new life under the spell of Non-cooperation movement. There was a growing demand to be dissociated from all Government institutions. In fact, Madhusudan had to swallow bitter criticism of his countrymen for having accepted the Ministership. It was misconstrued that the high salary of a Minister had allured him. Whatever be the reasons for accepting the Ministership,

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Madhusudan found it difficult to convince his countrymen that he was never fascinated by money. He had to go through an agonising period of mental conflict until at last a controversy cropped up between him and the Governor over the question of salary for the Minister of Local Self Government. Madhusudan expressed a desire to serve on honorary basis as Minister. which he found justified because, as people's representatives the office bearers in the Local bodies never accepted salary. He said :

> I have always looked upon gold as a handful of dust which a man might throw from his hands and still be a man, a being with a divine spark in him. He must inspire the members of the Municipalities and the District Boards, all local bodies, local authorities and the villagers with a patriotic spirit, inculcate in them a genuine spirit of self sacrifice, a genuine desire for nation building and with their co-operation discharge the responsibilities of office. In an organisation in which all the workers are honorary, a salaried Minister mars the symmetry and harmony of the organisation. The office of the Minister of the Local Self Government ought to be honorary.

Madhusudan wanted to earn his living as a practising lawyer. Since the constitutional provision for a Minister was to receive payment of salaries, the Governor found Madhusudan's request unacceptable. On this controversy Madhusudan tendered his resignation on 8 March 1923. In trying to raise the position of a Minister above politics and power, with the lofty idealism of service and sacrifice, he became a martyr. Next year in June, he was accepted as a member of the Provincial unit of the Indian National Congress.

The Champion of the Underdogs

Madhusudan belonged to the first generation of Indian nationalist leadership that appeared during the beginning of the nationalist struggle and belonged to the category of Dadabhai Naroji, Ranade and Rames Chandra Dutta. Like them his conception on the contemporary economic problems was crystal clear. He was aware of the economic aspect of the colonial rule and was

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worried about the draining away of India's resources. A keen student of history and an ardent admirer of Orissa's glorious heritage, Madhusudan was aware of the harmful effects of British economic policies upon flourishing cottage industries. Orissa was famous for the gold and silver filigree works of gossamer delicacy. But the inroad of machines had jeopardised this artistic native craft. Madhusudan's nationalism immediately took interest in rescuing this glorious cottage industry of Orissa from ruin. Inside his own residential premises he set up a large factory in 1897 employing over one hundred fifty craftsmen at his own expenses. The factory soon became famous as Orissa Art Wares and produced beautiful filigree works of extraordinary artistic excellence. Revival of an old native industry was not his only aim. He was eager to restore the craftsmen of Orissa to a state of economic prosperity. In 1902, on the occasion of John Wedderburn, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal's visit to the Orissa Art Wares, Madhusudan urged upon the distinguished visitor to encourage the industry by giving liberal grants and to create an incentive among the workers by awarding prizes. Madhusudan often arranged industrial exhibitions to display the products of the Orissa Art Wares and sent large quantities of beautiful specimens as presentation to foreign dignitaries. The press was eloquent in praising the laudable efforts and felt amazed at the lavish investment made by Madhusudan.

As an avowed champion of rapid industrialisation and pioneer of a neo-industrial movement in Orissa, Madhusudan observed how the large quantities of raw hides were being exported from Orissa and India every year, and how the finished products from England were sucking the economic life-blood of the colonies. Agriculture alone was not considered to be a dependable source of living. He suggested mechanized industries to make use of the available raw materials, and to employ people and retain the wealth of the nation for an economic upliftment. He invited the ruling princes and Zamindars of Orissa to invest their wealth in rapid industrialization and himself purchased a 40-acre-plot near the Cuttack Railway Station to set up the Utkal Tannery. He brought modern appliances for processing hides and producing

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beautiful leather articles from the skins of crocodiles, lizards etc. In no time the Tannery earned international fame for the excellent quality of its products, providing immense joy and satisfaction to the nationalist in Madhusudan. He treated his workers well. Some of them had a criminal record behind, but now happily settled in the society through the efforts of Madhusudan. He spent millions of his hard earned money on this project showing least regard to profit-making or his own financial stability either.

Madhusudan was a great exponent of Swadeshi. Before the Indian National Congress came to think of the Swadeshi movement, he launched a movement in favour of indigenous goods. His Swadeshi programme included a scientific study of the ancient and indigenous system of medicine. On the occasion of the Utkal Union Conference, he advocated the use of home-spun cloth with a view to revive the ancient weaving industry in Orissa. He would himself turn up with **dhoti, chadar** and coat made of Khadi. From the rostrum of the Conference he appealed for starting a charkha movement in Orissa. For such early initiative taken in revival of the indigenous spinning and weaving industries, Madhusudan was requested by Gandhi for guidance - "You will of course teach me how to spread the message of the spinning wheel in Utkal". (12.8.1925) During the course of his visit to Orissa in 1925, Gandhi came to the Utkal Tannery and being highly impressed with the undertaking, bestowed fulsome praise on Madhusudan for his admirable efforts. As a member of the Imperial Council (1913-1916) Madhusudan tried to impress upon the Government that the development of industries in the country was their obligation. Industrial development would lead to a general economic prosperity in the country. The decadent and wretched conditions of industries in India were due to the insalutary influence of the British rule. In a voice ringing with bitterness he said :

> That is the feeling of the weaver who has taken to plough, leaving his loom; that is the feeling of the artisan whose hand stands paralysed to-day; that is the feeling of the artisan's son who took to English education with a view to get employment

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> as a clerk, but failed to secure such employment; and that is the feeling of an old man (himself) who has associated intimately with artisans during the last quarter of a century and has noticed their struggle for existence.(Proccedings of the Impeaial council 1914-15)

In his industrial undertakings Madhusudan was mostly an ideal theoretician. He lacked the practical outlook of a serious businessman. Explaining his economic concepts on industrial ventures he published two interesting essays entitled "Industrial Awakening" and "Liberation from the Industrial Fetters" in **The Oriya**. Through these essays he tried to explain that the Swaraj would not be justified without economic self sufficiency. For economic progress the Government should lay equal emphasis on agriculture and industry; the hand and the brain must co-operate with each other through proper education and the Indian capitalists should come forward to start industrial projects so that the resources and the man-power of the country would be harnessed together for economic progress.

That Madhusudan was deeply concerned for the economic upliftment of the peasants of Orissa was not only evident from the speeches he delivered in the floor of the Legislature, but also from his socio-political activities. He believed that peasants formed the real backbone of Orissa's economy; without their development any growth of the Oriya nation was unthinkable. During the annual sessions of the Utkal Union Conference he used to present a pathetically human picture of exploitation on a canvas. The picture depicted at the bottom an Oriya peasant digging the field with a spade. Whatever he produced part of it got into the pocket of either the trader or the money-lender; and the rest went to the Zamindar. The picture also depicted how the national wealth found its way to England, represented by a crown and an Union Jack. Madhusudan created a mass consciousness about the prevailing methods of economic exploitation which brought utter ruination upon the Oriya peasantry. During the period when the Orissa Tenancy Bill was before the Bengal Council, Madhusudan convened a meeting of the **royts** at Cuttack to ascertain their views on the

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bill. It was attended by over five thousand royts who came from far and near. In the meeting they expressed their hostile reaction against the proposed legislation. They gave vent to their bitterness against the evils of periodic settlements. Frequent settlements provided opportunity to corrupt revenue officials to manipulate records resulting in prolonged civil suits and impoverishment. They were so much harassed by the Amins that they said in one voice : "If the Amin comes again to our village we shall leave our house and hearth and migrate to distant lands where we may have rest". His experience over the Orissa Tenancy Bill prompted him to organise the helpless peasants through an association called the 'Praja Pratinidhi Sabha' (formed in 1913 with Madhusudan as the Secretary). The Sabha organised Kisan rallies in various district headquarters like, Puri, Cuttack and Balasore, providing the peasants a common platform to ventilate their manifold grievances. The Sabha tried to articulate a vigorous public opinion against the hateful Zamindari system which subjected the tenants to much harassment and humiliation. Madhusudan, along with Gopabandhu Das and Nilakantha Das, took keen interest in instilling a sense of unity among the poor peasants, who notwithstanding the lack of education, developed awareness to their problems and sought justice. This was no ordinary achievement of Madhusudan.

Thus, organisation of labourers and peasants, setting up of industries on the basis of either available raw materials or manpower, and providing employment opportunities to the members of the depressed classes formed the core of Madhusudan's economic programme. All this was motivated by a love for the country, its cultural heritage and the people. It is amazing to note that whatever fortune he had made as a flourishing lawyer was invested upon his industrial projects, the Orissa Art Ware and the Utkal Tannery (to the tune of Rupees 10,00,000/-) with a motive to earn fame for the Oriya nation, and not dividend for the capital invested. He was such a stickler for quality that for maintaining the good name of his Tannery products, he threw away goods worth several thousand Rupees which were sub-standard in quality. Justifying such action he would say "If a bad pair of

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shoes or badly tanned hide falls in the hands of a foreigner he will say that the Oriyas are cheats. I cannot earn such a bad name for my nation". Due to his non-commercial attitude these concerns became heavy liabilities incurring huge loss. To meet the deficit Madhusudan borrowed indiscriminately from both friends and professional money lenders huge sums of money which were beyond his capacity to repay. Ultimately this led to his insolvency and the liquidation of the industries in 1927. After he resigned Ministership in 1923 and came away from Patna to Cuttack, misfortune after misfortune piled upon him. Not only the fickle fortune deserted him, his health also began to deteriorate. Politically, he had already cast himself into the wilderness by declining to contest for the ensuing Council elections on Congress ticket. After joining the Congress in 1924 though he had accepted the Congress creed as a loyal member, the young Congressites were unwilling to accept him as their leader. Madhusudan therefore, wisely cleared himself from the political arena.

The Last Flicker

Despite his insolvency, illness and old age, Madhusudan was still regarded as the foremost public man of Orissa with heavy responsibilities for his countrymen. The announcement of the Simon Commission was like a soothing balm to his anguished mind. It rejuvenated the Moderates and the Swarajists alike to brisk activities. For all and sundry the time of attaining a separate political status for Orissa was not far off. Madhusudan's constant guidance to an enterprising group of Moderates (Braja Sundar Das, Raja of Kanika, B.N. Mishra, Bar-at-Law, Sudam Charan Naik, Laxmidhar Mohanty, Bhikari Charan Patnaik and Bhubaneswar Das etc.) and his unshakeable faith on the policy of Moderation at last bore fruits. But the appointment of Boundary Committee for the proposed province was both a threat and a challenge to the proponents of amalgamation. There were Oriya-speaking tracts in Bengal (Midnapore), Bihar (Singhbhum), the Central Provinces (Phuljhar, Khariar etc.) and Madras (Ganjam, Jeypore and Vizianagram) where public opinion should favour their amalgamation with the new province. Without these areas the

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leaders felt that the new province would be a truncated one leaving a substantial portion of the Oriya-speaking tracts under the neighbouring provinces. The challenge prompted Madhusudan to pay a visit to Jamshedpur and address public meetings propagating the cause of amalgamation. The inclusion of this industrial city in Orissa, he hoped, would facilitate economic progress. An association of the Oriyas was formed to systematically work out a popular movement. J.L. Kenan, the General Manager was persuaded by him to use his influence upon the Oriya workers and tender favourable evidence before the Boundary Commission. From his own resources Madhusudan sent five thousand propaganda leaflets and some money for distribution among the workers of the factory.

The Boundary Committee headed by Sir S.P.O'Donnell with H.M. Mehta and T.R. Phukoon as members, came to Cuttack in November 1931. Inspite of acute illness Madhusudan received them at the Railway Station and appealed for justice for his countrymen. The Commission were to examine and report on the financial and other consequences of setting up a separate administration for Orissa and to make recommendation regarding the boundaries. After completing investigation the Commission submitted their report on 19 April 1932 recommending a boundary for the proposed province which fell far short of the expectations of the Oriya leaders. Several protest meetings were held in the outlying Oriya-speaking tracts against the decision of O'Donnell Committee.

The exclusion of Singhbhum district (Bihar) and the Parlakimedi estate (Ganjam) caused great anxiety and disappointment for which some young leaders (Harihar Mahapatra of Cuttack, B.K. Patra of Jeypore who later became the Justices of High Courts) argued that the proposed province should better be rejected by the people and a vigorous movement launched. Some even suggested that the Utkal Union Conference be revived to spear-head the movement. As the O'Donnell Committee had expressed their apprehension regarding the economic viability (There would be a huge deficit of Rs.35.21 lakhs) of the new political setup Harekrushna Mahtab and some other Congress leaders opposed

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the Government's proposal for separating Orissa from Bihar. They opposed on account of the possibility of heavy taxation on poor peasants to make up the deficit. Under the circumstance a Leaders' conference had to be convened at Cuttack on 12-13 February 1933 with Bhubanananda Das as the Chairman. To sort out the differences among the leaders Madhusudan attended the conference and delivered a long impassioned speech tracing the history of the Oriya movement for amalgamation of the scattered tracts and the results of his untiring efforts. Emphasising upon unity and sacrifice he called upon the leaders to wage an undaunted struggle till the goal was achieved and blessed them well in their noble endeavour by saying : "Knock, knock, but don't kick and it (the door of justice) shall open."

After much thought and careful deliberation at the third Round Table Conference (17 November to 24 December 1932) the British Government published a White Paper on the proposals for constitutional reforms in India. The White Paper also declared the boundaries of the new Orissa province and that it would be headed by a Governor as the executive authority. A joint Parliamentary Committee was appointed to examine certain controversial issues like the non-inclusion of Parlakimedi and Jeypore in the new province. The Raja of Parlakimedi led a delegation to London to meet the Ministers, important Parliamentarians and the Chairman of the Joint Committee seeking justice. Scores of telegrams sent by the people of Orissa were piled upon the Viceroy's table on the same issue. For a while the hopes and aspirations of the Oriya-speaking people appeared to be hung on a delicate balance. Popular pressure began to mount upon the local Collectors and Commissioner whose attitude seemed to be quite favourable. A correct appraisal of the situation led the Joint Committee to decide; "that portion of Jeypore estate which the Orissa Committee of 1932 recommended should be transferred to Orissa; xxx and a small portion of the Parlakimedi estate including Parlakimedi town" They further suggested that the anticipated deficit of the proposed province "must be made good by federal subvention" Since further concession was out of question, the people of Orissa accepted the decision.

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But before the creation of the new province another question which concerned the Government of India was its administrative structure. The Viceroy felt that it would be unfair to ask the new province to take care of itself; it was essential to provide Orissa with an experienced administrator who would find easier to organise the new departments, assign duties to the officers of various cadre and run the routine administration on a conventional manner. In fact, there was not to be much difference between the pattern of administration in Bihar and Orissa, and the proposed province.

Lord Willington, the Viceroy, suggested the Home Government to take prompt measures to select the Governor of the new province who prior to the separation of Orissa from Bihar should be posted as a Special Officer for doing the spade work as prelude to separation. Further, he suggested the appointment of an Administrative Committee to enquire into the problems peculiar to the separate province. A Government of India notification therefore, declared

> Preliminary administrative preparation is a necessary condition in the establishment of a new province particularly when, as far as the future Orissa province territories would be taken from three separate provinces (Bihar and Orissa, Central Provinces and Madras). xxxx the Governor General of India considers it an advantage that administrative problems incidental to the relation of the new province should be brought under early examination. They have therefore decided with the approval of the Secretary of State to set up a Committee of Enquiry for the purpose.

The Administrative Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Sir John Austen Hubback with eight other members: Madhusudan Das, Laxmidhar Mohanty, Birabara Narayan, N.R. Naidu, W.O. Newsam, N.Senapati, Lokanath Mishra and Gourchandra Deb was to consider and recommend on:

> i) The location of headquarters of the new province,
> ii) The site, extent and the approximate cost of new accommodation required at the headquarters and

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districts.

iii) The question of affiliating Orissa with neighbouring High Court. University of one or more of the adjoining provinces.

iv) Territorial changes and their headquarters in the districts or Sub-divisions.

v) Whether the new province should have its own cadre for administrative and Police Service.

vi) Any other subject which may be referred to it by the Government of India.

The Committee met at Ranchi to hold discussion with various Departmental heads on the issue of separation. They circulated questionnaire for eliciting information on the above terms of reference and visited different towns and places of Orissa in October 1933 to examine witnesses. Soon after the report was ready, all members put their signature at the beginning and at the end. This was Madhusudan's last public work. Appreciating the Grand Old Man's tenacity, perseverance and keen interest in the proceedings. Sir John Hubback, who became the first Governor of Orissa when the new province came into being on 1 April, 1936, wrote :

> "I hope that your association with the Committee has been as agreeable to you as it has been with me. I greatly appreciate the help which you have given. You must be very much grateful to think that the object which you had at heart for so many years is now in sight of fulfilment."

The remaining few months of Madhusudan's life were an agonizing period of physical suffering; it witnessed a grim battle against the inevitable to which he finally succumbed on 4 February 1934 at the age of 86. He could not live to see the creation of the separate Orissa province. With his death Orissa plunged into profound sorrow and grief, but she reached a definite milestone of her history - the search for an identity was over. As a result of Madhusudan's life-long struggle, Orissa province at last became a reality.

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The Epilogue

Madhusudan Das was the greatest leader that Orissa has ever produced, perhaps one of the great sons of India who could not blossom to full glory on account of his provincial involvement. Had Orissa been a separate political entity, connected by railways, provided with equal educational facilities like Bengal, situation would have been entirely different, with Madhusudan surpassing the stature of Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjee. The insular existence of Orissa circumscribed his image. As a product of the political renaissance in India, he served as the beacon light of hope to the Oriya-speaking people for over half a century. This was no mean achievement for a man who struggled against heavy odds of the contemporary society to curve out a dignified place for himself and his countrymen. His rise to prominence was primarily due to his own resolute will, outstanding ability and uncommon public spirit. From very early life the indomitable zeal to be a man of eminence took him through various stages of life- first Oriya Graduate, first Oriya Post-graduate, Law graduate, Advocate, Member of the Provincial and Imperial Councils and first Oriya Minister under the Reform Scheme.

As a politician he had no apprenticeship under any preceptor; he was his own mentor. He was a liberal who nourished moderate views and favoured gradual constitutional reforms for the country. Though a loyalist and staunch admirer of the Crown, he never spared the Colonial Government for their numerous lapses. As a converted Christian he followed a secular and humane approach to religious issues. He was neither shy nor reticent in public life; rather felt always at home, irrespective of whether he was in a Court, or on a public platform, or in the Legislature or with the Viceroy. The problems of the Oriya-speaking people were uppermost in his mind. While assailing upon the Government for a rightful cause he always exhibited rare clarity, conviction and courage. In matters concerning education, industry, land reforms, local self government, budget and any issue that came across his way, he spoke with rare understanding and intelligence. As a linguist he was equally at home in English, Bengali and Hindi in addition to Oriya and could cite innumerable stories and episodes from the

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epics of both East and the West. The sharpness of his mind was proverbial.

Madhusudan Das was the most sought after legal practitioner in Orissa who earned lakhs of Rupees per year and defended many without charging fee. With this fabulous wealth he lived like a Lord, lavishly entertained friends and visitors, though himself was a very poor eater in deference to his abdominal ulcer. In a bid to revive the artistic activities of the past and earn renown for his countrymen he invested a substantial portion of his income in industrial undertakings. He had an insatiable desire to help others and generously donated money to individuals and organisations for any social programme. His residence at Cuttack Chandi Road was a social rendezvous apart from being a congenial place for political discussions. Rajas, Lieutenant Governors, Commissioners and VIPs of all categories visited him to be entertained lavishly and to carry art works of silver filigree as momentos. As the self appointed ambassador of his country Madhusudan went abroad twice (1897 and 1907) to draw the attention of the British public and Parliamentarians towards "Discontented India" He was a thorough nationalist who incessantly strove to glorify the Motherland. His patriotism was pure gold with no element of dross in it. Economic liberation from colonial exploitation and patronage of Swadeshi were other manifestations of his patriotism. As an optimist, he remained undeterred against unexpected setbacks, and fought with relentless vigour to achieve the set objectives.

Exceptionally sharp in mind, extraordinarily affluent in wealth, the accredited leader of the Oriya people - Madhusudan personified humility. On the occasion of the award of C.I.E. he was thinking of declining "the honour which would not sit kindly" on him. His study chamber was open to all-both the Rajas and the peasants in Orissa took him as their best friend. The vigour and zeal which he showed in defending the interests of the Rajas of Puri and Keonjhar before the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal was exhibited with equal gusto in case of the poor peasants. He played politics with his cards on the table and had a remarkable ability for organisation. He was given to trusting his friends and followers; he gave them love and loyalty and in return got both in abundance.

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Though he strode like a colossus in the political arena of Orissa he was not without critics. With a proud and sensitive spirit he tried his best to remain away from acrimony and feud, because the critics were his one time disciples and he felt that the criticism was primarily on caste-consideration. He was himself above caste, community and self-interest. His faith in the virtues of moderation was admirable. Though he believed in the economic aspect of the Gandhian movement, he disapproved its political objectives.

Madhusudan had begun his career as a teacher, for a very brief period though; and all through he posed as the teacher of the Oriya-speaking people, imparting them the lessons of nationalism, hammering them together to one nationality, inspiring them with the glorious incidents of history and emphasising upon their intellectual development through education. He loved literature, music, academic discussions and had an irresistible fascination for the students and students' organisations. He never shunned any request from the students. The 'National School' of Gopabandhu Das at Satyabadi evoked unstinted admiration from his critical mind. Himself an intellectual giant, he could spot out easily the spark of genius in any man he had the occasion to come across.

Madhusudan was the maker of modern Orissa. His achievements and limitations can be correctly assessed through a historical perspective, because he alone served as the stimulating force behind the historical developments of Orissa during the most formative period of 19th and 20th centuries. Any nation would feel justifiably proud of such a great son.

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GLOSSARY

Abadhana	Teacher in a village Primary School
Amin	A native settlement officer
Amla	A native officer either in a Judicial Court or Revenue office
Chadar	A piece of cloth which covers the upper portion of the body
Daroga	A sub-ordinate Police officer
Diwani	Authority to collect revenue
Gumasta	As agent of the Zamindar to collect rent
Jagir	Service lands, Rent free holdings
Jama	Total amount of rent payable by a cultivator to the Zamindar, Revenue Payable
Muharrirs	Petition writers
Purusottam	Puri town
Royt	A peasant, cultivator
Sanand	A grant or charter, a document granting titles, privileges, or offices
Sheristadar	A record keeper in Collector's office of Judicial Court
Siccas	A stamped coin, especially the silver currency of the Mughal kings adopted by the Indian Princes and East India Company
Tahsildar	A collector of revenue, A native revenue officer

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